

Compromising Positions: An Analysis of the Relations of Power and Freedom in Select Australian University Settings.

Sharon Andrews, B. Soc. Science (Hons, SCU)

Social Science and Planning

School Global Studies, Social Science and planning

Design and Social Context

RMIT University

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Declaration by the candidate

I certify that the content of this thesis is the result of my own work which has been carried out since the commencement of my candidature and that this thesis does not incorporate any material submitted previously to qualify for any other academic award. I also certify that the thesis does not contain the work of others except where due acknowledgement has been made. Editorial assistance has been provided by Professor Rob Watts in his supervisory role.

Sharon Andrews

23 March, 2007

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Summary

The Australian higher education landscape has changed markedly over the past twenty years with the emergence of the so-called ‘enterprise university’. Within this model, achieving ‘competitive advantage’ has become the primary goal of the university. In effect, the emergence of the so-called enterprise university has narrowed the definition of utility and reconstructed the normative regulatory frameworks at work in Australian higher education institutions.

Although, these changes have impacted significantly on the working lives of Australian academics, research into academic freedom is relatively scarce. More concerning, much of the literature on the changing conditions of academic work is founded on very narrow definitions of freedom and power. In this thesis I use the work of Michel Foucault to elucidate the limitations embedded in conventional approaches to ‘academic freedom’ and the conceptions of power that underpin them. I contend that the conventional approach to academic freedom does not capture all the ways in which the activities of academics are shaped by regimes of power. Relying on more expansive definitions of both power and freedom, I explore the perceptions and lived experiences of academics working in Schools of Social Work or academic units that teach social/community studies.

More particularly, I am concerned with the current conditions of academic work and the extent to which these conditions constrain or enable the practice of public scholarship. This term, public scholarship, can be understood as scholarly and creative work in the public interest. It includes scholarship planned and carried out with community partners, scholarship that produces a “public good” such as broadly accessible research results and research and teaching that seeks to ‘make a difference’. Most importantly, this term also includes scholarly activity that enables public discourse on the experiences we have and the meaning and significance of these in terms of both the problems and

possibilities of communal life itself. For me public scholarship is an act of engagement with the socio-political arrangements that impact on people's lives and particularly those that manifest exclusion, exploitation, oppression, inequality or injustice.

The findings of this research suggest that the conditions of academic activity are increasingly being hedged in by market demands, political agendas and institutional priorities. Increasingly, the value of academic activity is judged according to its attractiveness to 'cashed-up' stakeholders. In this regard a consumerist ethic displaces a broader public ethic in the delivery of courses and the formulation of research. In effect, commercial and competitive concerns underpin both the national policy framework in which universities operate and the value judgements made in relation to academic disciplines, academic work and individual performance. These concerns also underpin academic decision-making in terms of how they spend their time and where they direct their efforts. All of the universities examined in this study can be said to encourage and reward a thorough-going careerism that manifests servitude to consumers, niche-markets and income generating partnerships. Although the intensity of this discourse varies between universities, as does the degree to which academics embrace an entrepreneurial identity, it is quite clear that no academic is going to achieve promotion on the basis of their political engagements, community service or teaching prowess.

In effect, contemporary power relations manifest a form of economism which has had a homogenizing effect on academia. Academics are urged to find ways to link their work with potential 'investors'. This was a feature of every setting explored as part of this study. In this regard the emergence of the so-called enterprise university has narrowed the definition of utility and depoliticised key collective norms within and across higher education institutions. The privilege given to income generation is both pervasive and largely uncontested.

Rather than institutionalizing freedom, universities are fostering conformism. Economic instrumentalism in scholarly activity is engendering a form of pragmatic closure that is stripping the university of its' potential to challenge and confront social relations and knowledge production practices that disenfranchise people and/or reproduce disadvantage and oppression. This situation is exacerbated by the academic professions' lack of solidarity and by a style of academic professionalism that 1) is self interested and 2) creates numerous alibis for passivity and inaction in the face of institutional practices and social arrangements that reproduce exclusion, inequality and injustice – not to mention a lack of openness, transparency and public accountability. Most of the resistance that academics engage in is limited in so far as its acts to ameliorate the worst excesses of the current arrangements rather than challenging the dominant logic and norms that underpin them.

The findings of this research are cause for concern in that they do not bode well for the future of universities as public institutions. Put simply, the ethos and practices of many Australian universities and many Australian academics militate against practices of community engagement and social criticism both inside and beyond the university walls. In the current circumstances I believe that we are entitled to mourn the loss of an opportunity to make the university more accessible, more ethical and more useful in terms that go beyond well the economic.

We must be free not because we claim freedom, but because we practice it. -William Faulkner

Liberty has never come from the government. Liberty has always come from the subjects of it. The history of liberty is a history of resistance.
-Woodrow Wilson

Introduction

Over the past five years I have talked to numerous PhD students about their research. It is part and parcel of the shared journey. These discussions lead me to believe that often, if you scratch a research proposal you reveal a biography. Student's projects are usually linked to something in their own personal experience. In some cases this is quite obvious; in other instances the trigger is less distinct. My thesis has its genesis in my experiences working for the federal public service for twelve years. More specifically, my project stems from the frustration of working in an environment where conformism and silence were the norms.

I was employed in positions that purported to address important public issues – poverty and unemployment. These are areas that impact significantly on people's lives and I wanted to actively engage what I perceived as very limited and oppressive policy responses. However, my working conditions disqualified me from taking an active stake in these issues. Public servants can exercise very little freedom of interpretation and are forbidden from speaking publicly unless authorised to do so. In effect, as a public servant I operated in a space of foreclosure. Within this environment problems and solutions came pre-formed and were pre-ordained as important by ministers and department heads. The freedom to challenge the terms of the agenda, to speak of alternative ways of being, doing and understanding is almost non-existent and the lack of capacity to act was enforced by a myriad of rules, regulation and normative expectations. This was most memorably bought home to me when I was told to 'pack my social conscience in a

lunchbox and leave it at home'. I took the suggestion one step further and accepted, with alacrity, an offer of redundancy.

My departure from the public service did not close the case on my concerns about social justice and democratic politics. I accepted the fact that the public service is always going to manifest foreclosure. However, I questioned whether other public institutions might act against this by practicing this openness in various kinds of thought and action I found myself teaching in a university and undertaking a Ph.D. Early I had come across colleagues using the language of academic freedom. I guess too, that I had thought universities were places devoted to openness, critical thinking and what I call public scholarship. Yet I saw very little of this. I was puzzled. That puzzle turned into a question that animates this thesis: what are the relations between power and freedom with contemporary Australian universities and how do these shape academic activity within these settings?

In this regard, I am primarily concerned with the current conditions of academic work and the extent to which these conditions constrain or enable the practice of 'public scholarship'. I use this term, public scholarship to refer to scholarly and creative work carried out in the public interest. It includes scholarship planned and carried out with community partners, scholarship that produces a "public good" such as broadly accessible research results and research and teaching that seeks to 'make a difference'. Needless to say these ways of describing public scholarship will need further specification and exemplification which I will leave to later in this thesis. However, it can be said that this term also refers to scholarly activity that enables public discourse on the experiences we have and the meaning and significance of these in terms of both the problems and possibilities of communal life itself. For me public scholarship is an act of engagement with the socio-political arrangements that impact on people's lives and particularly those that involve practices and relations of exclusion, exploitation, oppression, inequality or injustice. Following Maurice Meilleur, I contend that public

universities should be especially attentive to power relations/consequences that '(a) are neglected for political and intellectual reasons by government officials, public commentators/analysts and the media, and (b) concern topics that lay citizens may not understand, or about which they may not be able to ask informed questions'¹.

My concern in this thesis is to examine both the discursive forms that the idea of 'academic freedom' gave rise to and to explore the ways these ideas either inform or fail to inform the practice of public scholarship.

The discourse(s) of academic freedom

Academic freedom is constituted in a number of ways, e.g., as an enabling condition for the achievement of particular ends or as a philosophic proposition or as a moral imperative². In a recent ground-breaking study, Gerlese Akerlind and Carole Kayrooz mapped the variety of ways that academic freedom is thought about by Australian academics working in the social sciences³. As a phenomenographic study, the findings indicate the diversity of ideas academics had about 'academic freedom' and the scale of those differences. In other words, these researchers identified key differences in the way in which academics constituted the notion of academic freedom.

The differences in thinking about academic freedom were situated across two primary dimensions - the kinds of constraints regarded as an appropriate part of academic freedom and the role of 'internal' and 'external' factors in creating academic freedom. In

¹ M. Meilleur, *The Political Scientist as Pain Killer*, Ph.D Thesis, Indiana University, 2004.

² UNESCO, *Autonomy, Social Responsibility and Academic Freedom*, Thematic Debate, World Conference on Higher Education - Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century, 5-9 October, 1998, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001173/117320e.pdf>, viewed 26 April 2005.

³ G. S. Akerlind & C. Kayrooz, 'Understanding Academic Freedom: The views of social scientists', in *Higher Education Research and Development*, Vol. 22, No. 3, November, 2003, p. 338.

this regard Akerlind and Kayrooz identify five qualitatively different ways of understanding academic freedom⁴:

- (1) an absence of constraints on academics' activities;
- (2) an absence of constraints, within certain self-regulated limits;
- (3) an absence of constraints, within certain externally-regulated limits;
- (4) an absence of constraints, combined with active institutional support; and
- (5) an absence of constraints, combined with responsibilities on the part of academics.

That is some academics understood academic freedom firstly '... as a situation of unlimited freedom ... with a focus on there being no controls on or reprisals for the activities that an academic may engage in'⁵. Others, (category 2) held a similar view while recognising some self-imposed limits. For example, one respondent argued that academic freedom '... means the ability for me to set the direction of my research outcomes based on what I believe to be the salient research developments in my disciplinary field'⁶. On the other hand, category 3 respondents recognized a broader range of constraints as legitimate including external rather than self-imposed limits. One category 3 respondent suggested that:

Academic freedom relates principally to my research, teaching and my relationship with my employers. First it means that I should be able to undertake research of my choosing and publish the results without gaining permission from my employment or an external agency. Second, it means that the only constraints on my teaching should be the broadly accepted understandings of academia in general and my field in particular. That is, academic freedom does not mean that I can teach whatever I like, how I like rather that the constraints are set by collegiality and the commonly accepted standards of balance and scholarly enquiry. Third, that my employment relationship, including job security, promotion and normal academic benefits, should be unaffected by my personal and scholarly expression⁷.

⁴ Akerlind & Kayrooz, p. 332

⁵ Akerlind & Kayrooz, p. 333.

⁶ Akerlind & Kayrooz, p. 334

⁷ Akerlind & Kayrooz, p.334-335

It is important to note the effect of this approach to academic freedom. Akerlind and Kayrooz note the first three responses constitute academic freedom in a purely negative sense i.e. as non-interference. This view effectively dominates the literature on academic freedom in Western countries. In her doctoral thesis on the politics of freedom in select American universities, Karen McClafferty contends that academic freedom is often constructed in its most basic terms as a sacrosanct sphere of isolation where academics undertake scholarly activity without undue interference from governments, community interests or management imperatives⁸. In Australia, three-quarters of participants of a recent study indicated that ‘... academic freedom denotes a freedom from constraints...’⁹.

In contrast to this traditional and negative view, others (category 4) respondents treated academic freedom as ‘... requiring not only the absence of interference but the presence of supports to enable the exercise of academic freedom’¹⁰. One academic put it this way:

Academic freedom refers to the capacity (time, space and resources) to undertake intellectual work, both knowledge generation and dissemination, in a climate that is free from interference by vested interests external and internal to the academic community...¹¹

Finally, there is an expansive view (category 5). This speaks of a responsibility to actually exercise freedom ‘... by way of participating in social debates and undertaking research and teaching ...’. In the words of one category 5 respondent:

Academic freedom means the ability and integrity to conduct research for the public good without fear or favour. It means the freedom to be able to research and make public comment on important matters of social significance without

⁸ K. McClafferty, *The Politics of Freedom in Higher Education: A Comparative Case Study of Faculty Autonomy in the Educational Research Process*, Ph.D Thesis, University of California at Los Angeles, 1999, p.3.

⁹ C. Kayrooz, P. Kinnear & P. Preston, *Academic Freedom and Commercialisation of Australian Universities: Perceptions and experiences of Social Scientists*, Discussion Paper, No. 37, March, The Australia Institute, Canberra, 2001.

¹⁰ Akerlind & Kayrooz, p. 335.

¹¹ Akerlind & Kayrooz, p. 335.

concern (fear of repercussions) of the consequences of such action. Academic freedom is the obligation of academics to make social and political commentary¹².

This expansive view of academic freedom combines negative freedom (freedom from interference) and positive freedom (institutional supports) with a political dimension in regard to the idea of freedom – as – responsibility to engage in social and political debates. From this perspective, academic freedom is a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Academic freedom becomes the practice of university academics who construct and disseminate knowledge as a public good and undertake a role as social/political critic and conscience. In effect, the political dimension of academics' freedom is critical to the legitimacy of the university as one of the few institutions that has a role in publicly challenging the cultural arrangements and received wisdom's of the day.

Though this may not by itself, legitimate the position there is a small but distinguished body of political theory which supports this expansive view of a politics of freedom. The work of Hannah Arendt supports this focus on political freedom. For Arendt, being political means '... establishing new relations and creating new realities through public action'¹³. Influenced by the work of Arendt, Maxine Green also argues that it makes little difference to see ourselves as someone who has been granted this or that freedom, [for example, the freedom to teach without interference], what is paramount is that we are able to enact freedom with others – to take the initiative and to break through or transgress some boundary in order to instigate change¹⁴. As will become clear I will use this Arendtian- standpoint to explore the conditions and practice of academic freedom as a vital source of a 'politics' of higher education which incorporates 'the constitution of alternative orders' in addition to the disruptive activity of critique¹⁵. In this regard, the

¹² Akerlind & Kayrooz, p. 336.

¹³ H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed., University of Chicago Press, London, 1998, p. 200

¹⁴ M. Greene, *The Dialectic of Freedom*, Teachers College Press, New York, 1988.

¹⁵ M. Orlie, *Living Ethically, Acting Politically*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1997, p. 76.

practice of political freedom is an attempt to challenge existing power relations and generate power effects that we can live with. In other words, we exercise political freedom to the extent that we make visible the effects of power on others and ourselves and open them to political action. Melissa Orlie argues that ‘When we associate politically we thoughtfully redirect the invisible powers that make us what we are’¹⁶. The value of adopting such a framework is suggested by a brief overview of current scholarship on the modern university.

Research on the freedom of academics’ – a review of the relevant literature

Despite a plethora of commentary and theorising about the changing nature of academia since the 1980s, the research literature on academic freedom remains limited in quantity and scope. There are two major studies on the changes to Australian higher education. These studies are Marginson and Considine’s project on the Enterprise University¹⁷ and Slaughter and Leslie’s study of ‘Academic Capitalism’¹⁸. The authors of both studies assert that ‘power is becoming both more and less centralised’¹⁹. Michael Gallagher explains this seemingly contradictory finding arguing that:

There is simultaneously a loosening and a tightening of regulatory measures; a loosening of input and process controls to enable universities to be more enterprising and a tightening of demands relating to educational standards and cost-effective use of resources as they become so²⁰.

Marginson argues that this point highlights the fact that universities are ‘...doubly structured, by internal configurations of power and by their intersections with outside

¹⁶ Orlie, p. 79

¹⁷ S. Marginson & M. Considine, *The Enterprise University: power, governance and reinvention in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000.

¹⁸ S. Slaughter & L. L. Leslie, *Academic Capitalism, Politics, Policies and the Entrepreneurial University*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1997.

¹⁹ Slaughter and Leslie, p. 230-231

²⁰ M. Gallagher, *The Emergence of Entrepreneurial Public Universities in Australia*, paper presented at the IMHE General Conference of the OECD Paris, September 2000, p. 49.

interests...'²¹. However, it does not tell us how the relations of power and freedom play out in the daily working lives of academics. Increased autonomy for senior executive staff does not necessarily entail increased freedom for academics. Indeed, Bartos contends that university autonomy may be actively exploited to regulate the freedom of academics, particularly where there are diverging interests between senior executive and academic staff²². Thus, although studies of institutional autonomy indicate changes that might be significant, the effect of these changes needs to be established rather than assumed.

Leslie Vidovich and Jan Currie²³ have examined the issue of academic freedom as part of a larger study on the changing nature of academic work. These authors undertook comparative research in three Australian universities (University of Sydney, Murdoch University and Edith Cowan University) and three American universities. One hundred and fifteen academics were interviewed at the Australian universities in order to determine whether they have sensed a decrease in their autonomy and to ascertain the extent to which academics perceive a direct relationship between demands for increased accountability and decreases in freedom. These authors presented the following findings:

At the pre-Dawkins universities, about two thirds of respondents (70% at Sydney, and 65% at Murdoch) identified a decreased sense of autonomy, and very few, if any, experienced an increased sense of autonomy. By contrast at Edith Cowan, only half of respondents (50%) felt less autonomous, and almost one quarter (22%) experienced an increased sense of autonomy²⁴.

This study suggests that academics are concerned about a perceived loss of freedom. However, it does not identify whether or not there has been actual changes in the way

²¹ S. Marginson, 'The Enterprise University in Australia', *Leading and Managing*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2000, p. 99.

²² M. Bartos, 'The academic freedom charter experience', in *Australian Universities' Review*, 33(1/2), 1990, pp. 23-27.

²³ L. Vidovich, & J. Currie, 'Changing Accountability and Autonomy at the "Coalface" of Academic Work in Australia' in J. Currie & J. Newson, *Universities and Globalisation: Critical Perspectives*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 1998, pp. 193-211.

²⁴ Vidovich and Currie, p. 203

that academics practice freedom. In this regard, little attention has been paid to academics *exercise* of freedom and their *experiences* of power relations in contemporary universities.

A study commissioned by the Australia Institute²⁵ represents the most detailed analysis of academic freedom in the Australian higher education sector. This research focused on social scientist's perceptions and experiences of academic freedom in an environment of increasing commercialization and accountability measures. The study incorporates 20 key informant interviews, a web-based questionnaire survey completed by 165 academics and in-depth interviews with 20 respondents. The key informants were used to inform the design of the web questionnaire and the in-depth interviews were used to confirm, clarify or elaborate on the findings of the survey.

The findings of this research suggest that almost all participants were concerned about the state of academic freedom in their universities – 'Ninety-two per cent of respondents reported a degree of concern, and over one-third were concerned to a major extent'²⁶. Furthermore:

At the collegial level, many reported an increase in competition between colleagues with just over half (51%) experiencing this to a major extent. A number reported experiencing restrictions on sharing ideas with colleagues due to commercial-in-confidence arrangements. At the institutional level, almost all had experienced an emphasis on funded over unfunded research and a valuing of courses that attracted high student enrolments and fee-paying students over other courses.

Direct interference with individual academics' teaching, research and publication activities was not widespread although 17 per cent reported being prevented from publishing contentious results, 12 per cent to a minor extent and 5 per cent to a major extent. Forty-one per cent reported that they had experienced a reluctance to criticize institutions that provide large research grants or other forms of

²⁵ C. Kayrooz, P. Kinnear & P. Preston, *Academic Freedom and Commercialisation of Australian Universities: Perceptions and experiences of Social Scientists*, Discussion Paper, No. 37, March, The Australia Institute, Canberra, 2001

²⁶ Kayrooz, Kinnear & Preston, p. 31

support (16 % to a major extent). *The cause of this reluctance and discomfort was not clear*²⁷.

In their conclusion, the authors of this study noted that ‘Many social scientists ... expressed the view that academic freedom is essential to the role of universities as an important and independent source of social enquiry’²⁸. These authors further argue that ‘The freedom to be constructively and responsibly critical without fear or favour is central to this role’²⁹. Despite emphasising the role of academics as a social critic, the researchers’ limited their conceptualization of academic freedom to its negative and positive components in their web-based questionnaire. Academics were not engaged on the issue of social criticism beyond the publishing of their research. In other words, the extent to which academics were willing and able to criticize state policies, including those that affect higher education was not explored in great detail.

Worse, this study was based on a rather limited idea of power in that it mainly focused on acts of prohibition (censorship/direct interference). Simon Marginson notes that ‘In the societies in which we live, modern governments rarely govern through the “direct” application of force or command-the exhaustive control of human behaviour. Rather, people are nudged in the right direction, “caused to behave” in the required manner’³⁰. This observation suggests that in order to grasp the phenomenon of power in contemporary universities, we need to broaden the way in which we understand (and research) power. This is a task that I take up in chapter three.

Overall, the Australia Institute’s study makes a significant contribution to our understanding of academic freedom but does so at the expense of treating both power and freedom too narrowly. My thesis is designed to complement and expand upon the

²⁷ Kayrooz, Kinnear & Preston, p. 31, emphasis added.

²⁸ Kayrooz, Kinnear & Preston, p. 45

²⁹ Kayrooz, Kinnear & Preston, p. 45

³⁰ S. Marginson, ‘How Free is Academic Freedom’, *Higher Education Research and Development*, Vol.16, No. 3, 1997, p. 363.

existing literature. Instead of asking how power prohibits freedom, I have taken up the more expansive task of tracing the multitude of ways in which power shapes the exercise of freedom within select Australian universities.

Approach to the research

In this study I explore the issue of power and freedom in Australian universities by way of semi-structured interviews and the use of secondary sources such as institutional/governmental policy documents. I use a multiple case study approach to examine the similarities and differences in the way that academic freedom is understood and practiced (or not) in three different types of universities – one ‘Sandstone’, one ‘Gum Tree’ and one ‘New University’. In using these terms I am drawing on an abridged version of the typology deployed by Marginson and Considine³¹ in their study on power and governance in Australian universities.

The ‘Sandstones’, ‘Gumtrees’ and ‘New’ universities diverge markedly in terms of their age and thus their status, inherited advantage and capacity to draw upon a ‘tradition’³². The Sandstone universities represent the first universities to be founded in each of the states. The Gumtree universities represent those institutions founded in the post-war boom period between 1960 and 1975³³. As the name suggests, the New universities are those established after 1986. Many of these universities started life as Colleges of Advanced Education³⁴. New universities are often called Dawkins universities.

The origins of these three types of universities reflect historically evolving and so different stories about the role of the university. The Sandstones were understood to be the work of social elites creating a university that would reproduce social elites. In

³¹ Marginson & Considine, 2000.

³² Marginson & Considine, 2000.

³³ Marginson & Considine, 2000.

³⁴ Marginson & Considine, 2000.

contrast, Gumtree universities constituted and were constituted by a discourse of nation-building at the high-water mark of a period marked by nation-building rhetoric in the 1960s and early 1970s. New universities have been constructed in and through a more instrumentalist conception of the role of universities in an age of globalization and as part of a knowledge economy. By comparing cases across different institutional sites I have been able to identify continuities and discontinuities in the way that power shapes the freedom of academics within these different institutions.

In order to further delimit the research, I have focused on academics who work in Schools of Social Work or academic units that teach social/community studies. I chose to focus the project in this way in order to get a degree of consistency, by examining work place settings that are similar. This is something that is absent in studies that are based across a wide range of disciplines or that focus on disciplinary entities that are actually extremely diverse such as the 'social sciences'.

More importantly, I chose these particular work settings because many academics in these kinds of schools or departments claim a stake in 'speaking truth to power' and of having a role to play in initiating change in the social arrangements that impact on people's lives, particularly those who may be relatively voiceless in their own right. In this regard, these academic organizations are, arguably, more publicly oriented and 'political' than most and thus are useful in terms of gauging the relations of power and freedom within Australian universities and the extent to which these enable the practice of public scholarship.

Participants were drawn from two sandstone universities, two new universities and one Gumtree. A letter was sent directly to prospective participants at their workplaces. The letter detailed the focus of the study and what participants would be required to do. In total, twenty-four academics were interviewed for this study. This number is within the norm for qualitative research projects and is consistent with other studies related to

academic freedom. Karen McClafferty's study on the politics of freedom in American higher education was based on semi-structured interviews with 28 participants³⁵. Gina Anderson interviewed thirty academics across eleven universities for her study on academic resistance by Australian academics³⁶. Originally, I had hoped to interview thirty academics but numerous academics either failed to respond or apologized for not having the time to be part of the study. Given my desire to explore the relations of power and freedom across ostensibly similar academic entities, I chose not to broaden the focus of the project to achieve my preferred number of participants. In my view, the ability to make comparisons across similarly positioned academics and academic disciplines was more important than achieving a particular number of research participants.

The interview lasted anywhere from an hour to two and a half hours. The interviews were taped and transcribed. All of the participants were either on long-term contracts or continuing appointments (two academics were serving probationary periods before being confirmed as a 'continuing' appointment). In order to maximize the anonymity of the research participants, I have not disclosed the names of the universities in the thesis.

Significance of the Research

The potential significance of any research lies in its capacity to (a) add to the body of knowledge; (b) inform policy or; (c) inform practice³⁷. In this section I detail the significance of this particular study in relation to these different dimensions.

Firstly, this study adds to the body of knowledge in relation to the exercise of power within Australian universities. In particular, it details the similarities and differences in

³⁵ Karen Ann McClafferty, *The Politics of Freedom in Higher Education: A Comparative Case Study of Faculty Autonomy in the Educational Research Process*, Ph.D Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1999.

³⁶ G. Anderson, *Playing Their Game: An Exploration of Academic Resistance in the Managerial University*, Ph.D Thesis, University of Western Sydney, 2005, pp 202-203

³⁷ C. Marshall & G. Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 3rd Ed., Newbury Park, Sage, 1999, pp. 35-37.

terms of power relations across a number of institutional settings. In this regard, the research is underpinned by a refusal to treat the Australian higher education sector as a homogenous entity. Using an Arendtian tradition of political theory I argue for a broader focus of the lens through which power is examined. This means I go beyond existing research which almost exclusively treats power as having a singular referent – power as prohibition. In so doing I provide, what I would argue is a more nuanced account of the relations of power and freedom at play within the Australian university sector.

Secondly, this study is important in regard to university-related policy. In effect, it holds politicians and university leaders to account for the rhetoric they speak by addressing a very simple question: do universities support and enable the exercise of academic freedom for the good of different communities and the polity as well as the market? Being clear about the functions and affects of governmental/institutional power relations enables us to make judgments about the desirability or otherwise of our contemporary arrangements. This, in turn, opens up the prospects for different kinds of debate or change as needs be.

Similarly, this research investigates the practice of self-government and government in academic workplaces and it explores the ways in which academics are complicit in power relations that shape their freedom in particular ways. This enables us to ‘think what we are doing’³⁸ and then, perhaps do otherwise.

Finally, this study links the relations of power and freedom into broader public issues in terms of the current state of knowledge-related activities and what they mean for the public(s) beyond the university walls – who benefits from contemporary university practices, how and at what cost? In this regard, my research has the potential to initiate a long-overdue debate about the role of universities and the limitations of contemporary arrangements and practices.

³⁸ This simple yet challenging proposition is contained in Hannah Arendt’s prologue to ‘The Human Condition’ (Arendt, 1998).

Outline of the Thesis

In structuring this thesis I have gone against certain conventions. I do not have a chapter which is designated as a literature review. Rather I have drawn in and reflected on the work of others throughout the entirety of the thesis. I believe it makes more sense to do it this way. Hopefully, by bringing in the literature as and where it is needed I have created a more sustained sense of intellectual dialogue.

I have also chosen to eschew the convention which encourages an extensive discussion of the research methodology of the thesis. I do not claim that my research exemplifies a particular approach such as grounded theory for example, nor do I believe that I have captured all there is to know about the relations of power and freedom in Australian universities. What I have done is detail the perceptions and experiences of academics in select university settings. Like most researchers I did this by questioning my research participants (The interview guide is provided as an appendix at the end of the thesis). During the interviews I often cross-checked my understanding of what had been said by paraphrasing this for participants and seeking their feedback on whether I had accurately grasped their statements. I also checked interviewees' accounts against the policy documents of their institution and vice versa.

On this basis, the first chapter of the thesis provides the background to the research in that it details the key ideas that have orientated Australian higher education and the ways in which these have been enacted in practice. Although I provide some discussion in regard to the founding of Australia's first universities, the bulk of the chapter focuses on the post war years and the contemporary context in terms of the emergence of the so-called enterprise university.

The second chapter is where I address the theoretical relations of power and freedom in academia. I use this chapter to challenge what I see as the limited construction of power and freedom that too often underpin studies of academic freedom. The key aim of the

chapter is to provide an expansive account of power and freedom and more particularly the relations between them.

The third chapter provides a more expansive discussion of the idea of public scholarship. In this regard, I draw on the work of Zygmunt Bauman to provide an imaginary of universities as 'public' institutions. This is not how I see universities operating now, nor do I believe they have operated like this in the past. Rather it is an account of how I think universities could and should be. In effect, I provide a particular imaginary of universities as distinctly public institutions, one which forms the basis for evaluating the current conditions of academia.

Chapters Four, Five and Six present the findings of my research and so constitute the empirical section of the thesis. I use these chapters to present the findings of the research in terms of the relations of power and freedom that are evident within and across the three university types. I have resisted the urge to force these chapters into a rigid analytic or heuristic structure that links or integrates them. The first chapter examines the current conditions of academic's work within two of Australia's 'Sandstone' universities – one of which was exceptional in the intensity of its power relations so I wanted to discuss it on its own and then relate it to the other 'Sandstone' included in this study. In contrast, the 'new universities' were marked by similarity rather than exceptionalism. Nothing stood out as peculiar to a given site and thus I have not separated the institutions out. Rather I focus on them as a university type and make comparisons with their sandstone counterparts. Only one 'Gumtree University' was included in the study and this was given a chapter on its own.

In Chapter Seven I address the question of freedom more directly. In this regard I explore the perceptions, experiences of freedom in relation to traditional academic liberties – the capacity to exercise professional judgement in relation to teaching, the freedom to manage their own time and the ability to conduct research into topics they are interested

in. Given the importance I attribute to the political freedom of academics I also use this chapter to detail academic resistance to the emergence of the enterprise university and the practices that have accompanied it.

Chapter Eight ties the threads of the thesis together. In this chapter I review the techniques of power at play within select Australian universities, engage the question of resistance/complicity and draw out the implications of the findings in relation to the issue of public scholarship. In the last section of this chapter I indicate possible ways forward.

In the process of rapidly assimilating concepts from corporate approaches, bolstered by concepts from management science, contemporary colleges and universities risk losing sight of the historical reality that they are more than organisations per se, and that prescriptions for their management must not be reduced to general organisational imperatives.

Unfettered organisational imperatives have the potential to run wild in public colleges and universities – free of content, history, and values, disregarding their accumulated heritage as particular types of social institutions, traditionally within yet not of society, with educational legacies grounded in the centrality of knowledge and democratic values. To guard against this, I suggest that contemporary academic restructuring be viewed not only as organisational change but also as institutional change. And as such, we need to pause and reflect on the cumulative record of the recent past³⁹.

Chapter One: Australian Universities and the Politics of Scholarship

Australian universities have always been contested institutions. These contests stem from competing visions of the purpose of universities and the academic practices they enable and support. Tensions have also existed in regard to the universities relations with governments and the public beyond its walls. In order to place this research within a historical context, I use this chapter to detail the changing politics of scholarship in the evolution of universities in Australia. I do this firstly to spell out something of the continuities and changes in the way universities and the academic role have been characterised in official policy discourse. Given the focus on the contemporary theory and practice of academic practice I identify, to the extent that it is possible, what kinds of expectation government and universities had about the practice of scholarship. Although I begin with a discussion of the founding of the first universities, the bulk of his

³⁹ P. Gumpert, 'The Organisation of Knowledge: Imperatives for Continuity and Change in Higher Education' in I. Bliedie & M. Henkel (Eds.), *Governing Knowledge: A Study of Continuity and Change in Higher Education – A festschrift in Honour of Maurice Kogan*, Springer, Dordrecht, 2005, p. 130.

chapter is focussed on two key periods; the post 1945 period of expansion and the era of the enterprise university from the Dawkins reforms onward.

The Founding of the First Universities in Australia

The development of what was to become an Australian university system began in 1850 with the establishment of the first university in Australia, the University of Sydney. The University of Melbourne was established in 1853 and the University of Adelaide followed this in 1874⁴⁰. By 1911, every State Parliament had enacted legislation to found a university within its jurisdiction⁴¹. In sketching the intellectual ancestry of Australian universities, John Gascoigne identifies three distinct sources of influence – the two ancient universities of Cambridge and Oxford, Queen's Colleges of Ireland (Belfast, Galway and Cork) and the Scottish universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow⁴².

The Queen's Colleges in Ireland were significant in that they, in conjunction with the University of London, provided a model of the university as a secular institution complemented by denominational residential colleges. In Ireland, the arrangement '... avoided the sectarian minefield of Irish and British politics'⁴³. In Australia, this organizational configuration of a secular university with denominational colleges maintained some association between 'godliness and good learning' whilst responding to its location within a society 'where much of the populace were opposed to the idea of an established church'⁴⁴. W. C Wentworth, explorer, statesman and ardent advocate for a

⁴⁰ D. S. MacMillan, *Australian Universities*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1968.

⁴¹ In this regard Australian Universities differed from the ancient universities of Great Britain which were established by Royal Charter. See J Sinclair-Jones, *The idea of the university in Australia in the 1990s*, Ph.D thesis, Curtin University, 1996.

⁴² J. Gascoigne, 'The Cultural Origins of Australian Universities', *Journal of Australian Studies*, No. 51, 1997, pp. 18-27

⁴³ Gascoigne, 1997, p. 20

⁴⁴ Gascoigne, 1997.

university argued that it should be an institution ‘... at whose springs all may drink, be they Christian, Mohammedan, Jew or Heathen’⁴⁵.

Both the Universities of Sydney and Melbourne began with the establishment of a faculty of arts. The curriculum of these early universities focused on the enhancement of mental faculties and thus were dominated by classics, mathematics, logic and some branches of the natural sciences⁴⁶. This curriculum was broadened somewhat with the establishment of schools of Law, Medicine and Engineering. However, these areas of study were considered secondary. Professor John Woolley, the first Principal of the University of Sydney argued in his inaugural address that:

The idea of a university is two-fold; it is first, what its name imports, a school of *liberal* and *general* knowledge, and secondly a collection of *special schools*, devoted to the learned professions. Of these, the former is the University, properly so called. The second is complementary and ministerial. The former considers the learner as an end in and for himself, his perfection as man simply being the object of his education. The latter poses an end out of and beyond the learner, his dexterity, namely, as a professional man⁴⁷.

Institutionally, this perspective has its provenance in the English universities of Cambridge and Oxford. Intellectually, it reflects and reproduces Cardinal John Henry Newman’s discourses on the idea of the university. Newman, himself a product of Oxford, argued that the main function of a university was to cultivate ‘a knowledge which is its own end ... liberal knowledge, or a gentleman’s knowledge’⁴⁸. Gascoigne notes that a liberal education within this discourse ‘...was one intended for a gentlemen

⁴⁵ W Wentworth cited in C Turney, U Bygott & P Chippendale, *Australia’s First: A history of the University of Sydney*, Vol 1: 1850-1939, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1991.

⁴⁶ Gascoigne, 1997, p. 24

⁴⁷ Macmillan, 1968, p. 4. Woolley was the Professor of Classics and Logic and the first principal of the University of Sydney.

⁴⁸ Newman, cited in Gascoigne, 1997, p. 21

freed from many of the economic burdens of the rest of human kind⁴⁹. In this regard, advocates of an arts/classics-dominated liberal education were pressing for a ‘... a form of education suitable to the needs of an *already existing* liberal individual⁵⁰.

Over the next century and a half there would be many changes both to the form that Australian universities would take, in the kinds of things governments would expect of them and in the ways that academics would speak about their role. However, it was the second half of the twentieth century which saw significant shifts in the politics of scholarship in Australia. These shifts had their origins in the move to a mass tertiary education following the Murray Report (1959) and significant attempts to redesign universities after the Dawkins reforms (1987-1989). The universities were re-formed again after the Howard Governments accession to power in 1996

The Murray Report and the Liberal University

In 1956, Prime Minister Robert Menzies commissioned a review of Australian universities. This review was conducted in response to increasing concerns that the universities were unable to adequately discharge their duties. The committee on Australian Universities were invited to ‘indicate ways in which the universities might be organized so as to ensure that their long-term pattern of development is in the best interests of the nation’⁵¹. The commission’s inquiries were directed by four key terms of reference:

1. the role of the university in the Australian community;
2. the extension and co-ordination of university facilities;
3. technological education at university level; and
4. the financial needs of universities and appropriate means of providing for these needs⁵².

⁴⁹ Gascoigne, 1997, p. 21

⁵⁰ J. Sinclair-Jones, *The idea of the university in Australia in the 1990s*, PhD thesis, Curtin University, 1996, p. 72

⁵¹ Murray Committee, *Committee on Australian Universities Report*, AGPS, Canberra, 1957, p. 5.

⁵² Murray Committee, 1957, p. 5

This committee, chaired by Keith Murray, reported its findings in 1957. The Murray Committee report had major impacts on higher education in Australia, not surprising given its recommendations for a major boost in Commonwealth funding for universities, the establishment of a university grants commission to oversee the development of the sector and a marked increase in post-graduate and research activities (and a corresponding decline in sub-degree programs)⁵³.

Ian McShane contends that the notion of 'balanced development' provided an overarching architecture for the recommendations of the Murray Committee⁵⁴. The Committee applied the concept of 'balanced development' in different ways:

To the development of a well-rounded personality through principles of liberal education, to the identification and demarcation of institutional roles and functions within the tertiary system, to the relationship of tertiary institutions to the labour market, and to the dialogue between universities and government within the broader political framework of national development⁵⁵.

The Murray Committee's discourse on the 'liberal' university reflected the dominance of enlightenment ideals in the broader socio-political context. Great faith was placed in the prospects for 'investing' in man, whether that be on an individual basis through teaching or on a collective basis through research and the consequent development of new knowledge.

The Murray Report sought to embed the ideal of a liberal education at the centre of what was to become a national university 'system'. The committee's construction of a liberal education differed from that of the 'founding fathers' of the first universities. In the 1850s those advocating for the establishment of universities wanted a style of education that

⁵³ B. Williams, 'Governments and Universities since 1959', *Vestis*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 1982, p. 3.

⁵⁴ I. McShane, *Balanced Development: a study of the Murray Committee on Australian Universities*, Ph.D Thesis, University of Canberra, 1995, p. iv.

⁵⁵ McShane, p. 210.

was ‘... suitable to the needs of an *already existing* liberal individual’⁵⁶, one free from the burden of making a living. In contrast, the Murray Committee saw the achievement of a balanced personality as being ‘*dependent* upon the practice of a liberal education’⁵⁷. A liberal education was to be the means through which students would achieve complete mastery of themselves and their abilities⁵⁸. McShane argues:

In seeking to re-invigorate Australian Universities within the discourse of liberal education the Murray Committee gave attention to institutional practices that would encourage the proper formation of the individual scholar and consolidate the identification of these individuals within a community of like minds⁵⁹.

These institutional practices centred on more intense university experience, particularly for first-year students. For the purposes of initiating students into a community of scholars, universities were encouraged to increase on-campus residences and to make tutorials a prominent feature of university teaching⁶⁰.

The Murray Committee did more than prescribe particular approaches to teaching. It also ‘assigned a normative set of characteristics to members of the scholarly community, characteristics that some possessed, but some had to acquire’⁶¹. In this regard, the universities were constructed as guardians of intellectual standards and scholarly integrity. This is particularly evident in comparisons made between the ‘community of scholars’ and the members of the broader community:

Scholars and scientists who spend their lives in the search for knowledge should at least in their own spheres of inquiry, be proof against the waves of emotion and

⁵⁶ Sinclair-Jones, p. 72.

⁵⁷ Sinclair-Jones, p. 72.

⁵⁸ Sinclair-Jones, p. 72.

⁵⁹ McShane, p. 106.

⁶⁰ McShane, 1995.

⁶¹ McShane, p. 121

prejudice which make the ordinary man, and public opinion, subject from time to time to illusion and self-deceit⁶².

Implicitly, this comment constructs the liberal educational project as one which frees the individual from prejudice and the influence of the passions. Of primary concern was the cultivation of those habits of intellectual and moral self-discipline that marked a mature individual. These included an inquiring disposition, a methodical approach to the acquisition of new knowledge, a respect of differing opinions and a civilised way of responding to those who held them. A liberal education was understood to free students from the ignorance that stems from an individual's limited sphere of personal experience and the childhood habit of relying on others to provide us with an understanding of the world.

In this regard, the Murray Committee viewed the community of scholars and scientists as manifesting particular liberal virtues. Throughout the report academics and graduates are constituted as more or less 'objective', 'disinterested', 'non-partisan' and 'dispassionate'. Within the Murray Committee's discourse, being educated equates to being disciplined in the twofold sense of developing habits of the mind that embody self-control and addressing one's ignorance by participating in and contributing to the growth of different branches of learning. The committee was not rejecting professional education but it was putting it in its place:

The graduates needed are of an immense variety of kinds: doctors, dentists, lawyers, economists, ministers of religion, teachers, scientists, engineers, agriculturalists, veterinary scientists, technologists, administrators, and many others. Not only do the kinds proliferate, but the numbers needed in each kind continually increase. All of these of their very nature require a wide general education carried to a high level, and then highly specialized study on top of that⁶³.

⁶² Murray Committee Report, p. 10

⁶³ Murray Committee Report, p. 8.

The Murray Committee's emphasis on a broad general education, located primarily in the humanities, was designed to differentiate universities from other tertiary institutions and to privilege them in the hierarchy of post-compulsory education. In this regard, 'The Murray Committee was opposed to the extension of degree awards to the technical colleges'⁶⁴. A 'technical' curriculum was understood to be an inappropriate vehicle for a 'liberal' education. Technically trained students were 'men of one subject'⁶⁵ appropriately acquitted for their engagement with the labour market but insufficiently 'balanced' as scholars.

The Murray Committee also privileged universities above other tertiary institutions on the basis universities produced research as one of its key functions. In this regard the Committee argued that '... education is only one of the two central aims of a university. The other is research'⁶⁶. However,

Research is of various kinds and is conducted under various kinds of organization. But there is one kind of research which is in general done in universities and the greater part of which in recent generations has in fact been done in universities. It is obvious that most of the basic secrets of nature have been unraveled by men who were moved simply by intellectual curiosity, who wanted to discover new knowledge for its own sake. The application of the new knowledge usually comes later, often a good deal later; it is usually achieved by other men, with different gifts and different interests.

In making these arguments the Murray Committee intended to privilege the 'pure pursuit of truth' by 'knowledge intoxicated' scholars who 'loved the life of intellectual effort and inquiry for its own sake' – not for any immediate practical aim or profit on behalf of the scholar themselves or an interested third party⁶⁷. Although research was understood as

⁶⁴ McShane, p.169.

⁶⁵ This is the term used by the Catholic Schools Association of Tasmania in its submission to the Murray Committee, cited in McShane, p. 161.

⁶⁶ Murray Committee, p. 9.

⁶⁷ Murray Committee, p. 10.

important in terms of ‘keeping the march of human knowledge moving’⁶⁸, the Committee also took pains to link research with good teaching:

Able young men and women of 20 and 21 are not just school children; they do not wish to be just taught. They want to be put into touch with the fountains of knowledge; they want to see and hear and talk with the men who are “making” the modern knowledge. ... the teacher of young men and women needs to have some work of his own to gain their respect, and to keep his own, and also of course to stimulate their interest. It is manifestly not possible to teach well at the undergraduate level unless the teacher is sustained by living work of scholarship or research of his own. The whole history of university teaching proves this; and in any case it is obvious enough in day-to-day work to teacher and student alike.

In addition to constructing a discourse on liberal education and positing research as an essential element in university activities, the Murray Committee also sought to articulate what would represent proper relations between the Government and the universities. The committee was concerned that Governmental demands would place undue pressure on universities and thus diminish the quality of the scholarship that was produced in those universities. The committee argued that in order to secure the integrity of universities and the prosperity of the nation, ‘The value of pursuing knowledge for its own sake had to be balanced with demands for more utilitarian contributions of universities to national development...’⁶⁹.

In seeking to negotiate an appropriate relationship between universities and government, the committee introduced buffers to mediate between the two which as McShane points out came in the form of:

... an administrative one, in the form of a university grants committee. [and] ... an epistemological buffer, in the form of an adherence to the committee’s notion of the liberal university⁷⁰.

⁶⁸ Murray Committee, p. 10

⁶⁹ McShane, p. 181

⁷⁰ McShane, p. 181

The Murray Committee's recommendation that Australia should have an independent body to advise the Commonwealth on the financing and development of universities came as no surprise. Indeed, the Committee's Chair, Keith Murray, had presided over a similar body in Britain and had taken leave from this position in order to inquire into the Australian situation and report to the Menzies' Government⁷¹.

In 1959, the Government responded to the Murray Committee's recommendations by establishing the Australian Universities Commission (AUC). The AUC was a statutory body, which consulted with the universities and State Governments in order to provide advice to the Commonwealth on a range of matters including the level and distribution of funding. At this stage, Federal grants were matched dollar for dollar by State governments in relation to capital funding and 'one Federal dollar for each 1.85 dollars derived from State recurrent grants plus income from tuition fees'⁷². Williams claims that:

Given the nature of Federal/State financial relations, the creation of the AUC was of great benefit to the universities. It made possible a co-ordinated development of academic programmes for teaching and research without reducing that degree of university and academic autonomy required for the sustained health of each university⁷³.

In his discussion of the university grants committee in Britain, Eric Ashby outlines how the inherent tension between Government sponsored development and university autonomy was addressed. Ashby states:

Parliament (on the advice of the Department of Education and Science) determines what total sum shall be allotted to the universities. Authority to distribute this sum is delegated to a small body of people, the University Grants Committee, who, apart from the chairman, are not civil servants but are predominately academics, with a leavening of industrialists and persons with

⁷¹ McShane, p. 61

⁷² Williams, 1982, p. 3.

⁷³ Williams, 1982, p. 3

responsibility for education in schools. Thus the predominant loyalty of the committee members is to the beneficiaries of the parliamentary grant, not to the paymasters⁷⁴.

The AUC followed this British model in that it was both an advisory and a regulatory body. The AUC provided advice to the Commonwealth Government on the financial and developmental needs of universities and also administered programmes of recurrent and capital grants resulting from that advice⁷⁵. In constructing these arrangements, the Murray Committee took great pains to position the university grants commission as a mediating institution between universities and government rather than as an arm of government itself. In this regard the AUC was established as a statutory advisory body⁷⁶.

The structural arrangements recommended by the Murray Committee were accompanied, by a liberal discourse that aligned good scholarship with good government. Implicitly, if not explicitly, the Murray Committee Report constructed a social contract between the Government and Australian universities whereby the Federal government granted institutions and academics their freedom to teach, to research and to engage in scholarship as long as this activity was 'value neutral'. In this regard, the committee emphasized the need for academics to be self-disciplined and 'trustworthy' in their scholarly activity and for the public and governments to be tolerant of academics' exercise of scholarly authority:

The public, and even statesmen, are human enough to be restive or angry from time to time, when perhaps at inconvenient moments the scientist or scholar uses the licence which the academic freedom of universities allows him, and brings us all back to a consideration of the true evidence and what it might be taken to prove; and certainly the academic scholar has a clear duty to maintain a strong self-discipline to keep himself from attempting to speak with any authority outside his own field of knowledge. But by and large, as history again shows, the

⁷⁴ E. Ashby, *Adapting Universities to a Technological Society*, Jossey-Bass, London, 1974, p. 46.

⁷⁵ A P Gallagher, *Coordinating Australian University Development: A Study of the Australian Universities Commission 1959-1970*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1982.

⁷⁶ McShane, p. 190.

nations of the Western tradition have a credible record of consistently seeking to accept the need for personal integrity in their academic scientists and scholars, and indeed to encourage and nourish it. No nation in its senses wishes to make itself prone to self-delusion, or to deceit by other nations; and a good university is the best guarantee that mankind can have, that somebody, whatever the circumstances, will continue to seek the truth and to make it known. Any free country welcomes this and expects this service of its universities⁷⁷.

McShane argues that the Murray Committee elaborated a concept of the 'liberal university' that was congruent with the political liberalism of the day and that of Menzies himself⁷⁸. The report espouses concepts such as truth, individual freedom and an opposition to totalitarianism. Nonetheless, '... the committee were careful to argue that scholarship and politics were discrete areas of interest. In this regard, the committee sought to depoliticize the campuses ... yet ensure that the universities recognized and supported what the committee interpreted as ... the realpolitik of the time⁷⁹.

In practical policy terms the Murray Committee sponsored some long lasting and significant effects. In its initial negotiations the AUC was very successful in obtaining increased commitments for funding from State Governments. Due to the system of matching grants, this led to a marked increase in Commonwealth funding. In this respect, the Commissions proposed levels of funding rose "from a recommended £55,000,000 in the first triennium [1958-60] to £103,000,000 in the second [1960-63]"⁸⁰.

Beyond the installation of a dominant discourse around the idea of a liberal university, the work of these post-war committees was important in a material sense. In effect, the post-war committees were the catalyst for significant increases in relation to the number of universities, student enrolments, academic appointments and research funding. In

⁷⁷ Murray Committee Report, p. 11

⁷⁸ McShane, p. 192

⁷⁹ McShane, p. 193.

⁸⁰ S Davies, *The Martin Committee and the Binary Policy of Higher Education in Australia*, cited in Sinclair-Jones, p. 138.

1957 when the Murray Committee produced its report there was 36,568 students enrolled in Australian universities. By 1964, the year the Martin Report was tabled in Commonwealth Parliament; this number had increased two-fold to 76,188. Ten years later, when the Commonwealth assumed full financial responsibility for universities and CAE's, the number of students enrolled in the former was 142,300 and the number enrolled in the latter was 104,962⁸¹. This vast increase in students was accommodated by an increase in the number of universities. Before the commencement of the Second World War there were 6 universities in Australia. Thirty years after the war had ended this number has risen to 19. This increase in universities was complimented by a marked increase in the number of academic staff. Between 1945 and 1964, the number of full-time academic staff rose from 705 to 4,677⁸².

The Murray Committee Report also secured research and more particularly pure or basic research, as an essential and defining activity of all universities. In addition, the report located the responsibility for a liberal education solely within the universities. This was defined in terms of the breadth of studies and the extent to which the university experience developed a well-rounded individual rather than a narrow specialist - or worse - a technician. In this regard the well-being of the humanities became the litmus test for the health of the university sector as a whole.

As for the politics of scholarship, the Murray Committee sanctioned a liberal standpoint by freedom in a negative sense as freedom from interference. In this regard, the committee gave great weight to the proposition that the freedom of academics expands when governmental power retracts. Within the report the prospects for freedom were located in the professional integrity of the individual scholar. The committee contended

⁸¹ G. S Harman, 'Introduction' in G.S. Harman, A.H. Miller, D.J. Bennett & B.I. Anderson (Eds.), *Academia Becalmed: Australian Tertiary Education in the Aftermath of Expansion*. Canberra: ANU Press, 1980, p. 4.

⁸² A R Hall, 'Statistical Appendix', Table 7, in E. L. Wheelwright (ed.), *Higher Education in Australia*, Melbourne, F W Cheshire, 1965, p. 332.

that academics, unlike workers in other organizational settings, could be trusted to perform their role and expected tasks without the need for direct supervision or other control mechanisms⁸³. In addition, the Murray Committee privileged the idea that the university needed to be separate from the rest of society. The establishment of the AUC translated the idea into practice.

The success of the AUC in dramatically increasing funding to universities raised Prime Ministerial concerns that the ever-expanding university sector could ‘... swamp the budgets of the Commonwealth and the States’⁸⁴. In response to these concerns, the Government establishing the Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia. This committee was headed by Leslie Martin, the incumbent chair of the AUC.

In its report, the Martin Committee contended that technical education was undervalued within the existing tertiary education system. In response to this issue, the committee argued for a diversification of Australian higher education. This resulted in the establishment of colleges of advanced education (CAE) with missions that were differentiated from universities. Within the Martin Report there was a separation between liberal ideals (located in universities) and skill reproduction which the CAE’s were charged with producing. The colleges were conceived as teaching institutions first and foremost. Although not prohibited from conducting research they were not funded to undertake it:

The objective of the education provided by a technical college is to equip men and women for the practical world of industry and commerce, ... The university course, on the other hand, tends to emphasise the development of knowledge and the

⁸³ J. S. Western & E. Roe, ‘The Practitioners of Higher Education’ in J S Western and E Gross (eds.), *The End of a Golden Age: Higher Education in a Steady State*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1981, p.79.

⁸⁴ Letter from Menzies to Leslie Martin, Chair of the AUC, cited in Gallagher, 1982, p. 183.

importance of research; in so doing it imparts much information which is valuable to the practical man but which is often incidental to the main objective. Both

types of education are required by the community, and in increasing amounts, but it is important that students receive the kind of education best suited to their innate abilities and purposes in life⁸⁵.

Once again, the discourse of the liberal university was being powerfully asserted. These assertions constructed the liberal university as both an already achieved accomplishment and continued desirable end. However, the extent to which the discourse of the liberal university reflected reality is debatable. Davies argues:

The binary policy of higher education in Australia and Britain was flawed from the beginning. It derived from a concept of the university which bore little relation to the institution as existed in these countries and throughout the world⁸⁶.

Sinclair-Jones supports this argument suggesting that the discourse of the liberal university ‘...reflects more the preconceptions and prejudices of the leading Committee members, rather than being any real outcome of their findings within Australia’⁸⁷. Nonetheless, the continual reproduction of this discourse in the post-war period embedded these preconceptions and prejudices into the Australian consciousness.

The Dawkins revolution and the decline of the Binary System

The years between 1974 and 1988 saw a gradual shift in the responsibility for the allocation and administration of grants away from statutory commissions representing

⁸⁵ Martin, cited in Sinclair-Jones, p. 143.

⁸⁶ S. Davies, ‘The Martin Committee and the Binary Policy of Higher Education’ in Australia, cited in Sinclair-Jones, p. 138.

⁸⁷ Sinclair-Jones p. 135

the sector to the Minister and the Department⁸⁸. Jackson notes that ‘Ministerial authority was ultimately entrenched with the passage of the Higher Education Funding Act 1988.’. This legislation enabled the over-throw of the binary system of tertiary education in Australia and the establishment of what came to be known as the Unified National System (UNS). John Dawkins, Federal Minister for Education under Prime Minister Hawke, was generally credited with being the architect of these reforms. The so-called Dawkins reforms were the first in a series of Commonwealth Government policy initiatives credited with thoroughly transforming the Australian university system⁸⁹.

Details of the Unified National System were provided in a White Paper entitled *Higher Education: a policy statement*⁹⁰. This policy initiative abolished the distinction between universities and Colleges of Advanced Education. Kim Jackson notes:

Membership of the UNS was necessary if an institution was to be eligible for the full range of Commonwealth grants. Non-members would be funded on a contract basis for teaching purposes only. This led to a significant reduction in the number of institutions through amalgamations: from 75 Commonwealth funded separate institutions in 1989 to 36 members of the UNS and 8 non-members in 1991⁹¹.

The reconfiguration of the sector was not the only outcome of the Dawkins reforms. The White paper also introduced significant changes to the funding procedures relating to universities. These changes included a shift of research funding from general infrastructure to competitive research schemes, the introduction of a single operating

⁸⁸ K Jackson, *Higher Education Funding Policy*, E-Brief, Parliamentary, December, 2003, <<http://www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/SP/HEfunding.htm>, viewed 10 June 2005.

⁸⁹ R Watts, ‘The ‘Idea of the University’’, *Melbourne Studies in Education*, Vol. 43, No. 1, May, 2002, pp. 25-48.

⁹⁰ The Hon. J. S. Dawkins, *Higher education: a policy statement*, Canberra, AGPS, 1988.

⁹¹ Jackson, 2003.

grant to replace the existing general, equipment, minor works and special research grants and the allocation of additional operating grants for enrolment growth on a competitive basis⁹².

In addition, the White Paper positioned institutional funding as a Ministerial responsibility and established a educational profiling process whereby ‘... individual institutions negotiate agreements with the Department which form the basis for their funding⁹³:

Whereas the States Grants (Tertiary Education Assistance) Acts had stipulated specific operating grants for individual universities, the Higher Education Funding Act 1988 simply provided that an institution should receive ‘such amounts as the Minister determines having regard to the education profile of the institution⁹⁴.

The legislation that resulted from the White Paper also introduced two significant changes in relation to the charging of students. Firstly, the act required Australian undergraduate students to make a financial contribution towards the cost of their course. These contributions were made through the Higher education Contribution Scheme (HECS). In addition, from 1989 universities could charge post-graduate course fees. Jackson notes that ‘This market was progressively deregulated so that by 1994 universities were able to charge for most postgraduate courses and to determine the level of fees they charge’⁹⁵. The outcome of these developments was a university sector that is much more reliant on student contributions. The following table illustrates this shift.

⁹² J. S Dawkins, *Higher Education: a policy statement*, AGPS, Canberra, 1988.

⁹³ Jackson, 2003.

⁹⁴ Jackson, 2003.

⁹⁵ Jackson, 2003.

Table 1: University Income by Source, 1939–2001⁹⁶

	1939 %	1951 %	1961 %	1971 %	1981 %	1987 %	1991 %	1994 %	1996 %	1998 %	2001 %
HECS							11.7	12.8	11.6	17.2	17.4
Student Fees and Charges	31.7	16.7	8.6	10.4	0.0	2.3	9.8	10.8	13.4	16.0	19.8
Commonwealth (excl. HECS)	0.0	20.5	43.9	43.0	89.3	82.9	61.7	60.1	56.7	50.8	43.8
State Governments	44.9	43.7	36.3	35.7	0.8	1.0	5.1	1.9	1.4	1.1	1.7
Other (a)	23.3	19.0	11.2	10.8	9.9	13.7	11.7	14.4	16.9	14.9	17.5

(a) 'Other' includes donations and bequests, investment income, other research grants and contracts.

Sources: *Selected Higher Education Statistics* 1992; *Selected Higher Education Finance Statistics* (annual); *National Report on Australia's Higher Education Sector*, 1993, p. 75.

The intent of the Dawkins reforms was to align university activities with national economic priorities to a much greater extent than had previously been the case. The Dawkins reforms emphasized the strengthening of areas of immediate economic potential, the development of stronger links with business and industry and the construction of a more dynamic interplay between the discovery, use and application of knowledge⁹⁷. The effects of these developments included⁹⁸:

- an increase in vocationally orientated courses including professional post-graduate awards;
- the emergence of whole faculties, programmes and fields of knowledge that were previously outside the university system including nursing, tourism, hospitality management to name a few;

⁹⁶ Table reproduced from Jackson, 2003. p. 10

⁹⁷ C. Symes, D. Boud, J. McIntyre, N. Solomon & M. Tennant, 'Working Knowledge: Australian Universities and 'Real World' Education', *International Review of Education*, Vol. 46, No. 6, 2000, pp. 565–579.

⁹⁸ For example, see Symes et al, 2000 & Richard Davis, *The Unbalancing of Australian Universities*, <<http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/dissent/documents/asu/Davis.pdf>

- The closure of humanities departments; and
- The assimilation of disciplines such as sociology, history and politics into applied programmes of study rather than stand-alone disciplines; and

In addition to the changes in structure, funding and course offerings, Dawkins also initiated reforms to the governance arrangements within universities. Dawkins constructed higher education as an industry and lampooned the tradition of collegial governance. Indeed an overhaul of the internal management structure was a precondition for entry into the Unified National System⁹⁹. Marginson and Considine argue:

Since the Dawkins reforms, it has become a primary governmental objective to foster more business-like university organization. Dawkins outlayed specific funding for reviews of executive structure and organisational systems, and professional training for middle managers. He also created what was to become a recurring rhetoric¹⁰⁰.

The Dawkins reforms sponsored an economic-liberal conception of academics and academic scholarship. Universities were to be run on business principles and academics were implicitly defined as employees whose role it was to serve organisational ends. These ends were to be determined by the Federal government and the machinations of the market. Within this discourse, students were positioned as paying customers rather than initiates and research activity was conceptualised as having commercial value which was to be exploited. Economic utility was given great weight as a key organising value. This marked an important shift in the politics of scholarship. The question of what is the role of the universities was no longer framed in terms of what interests the Federal Government had in maintaining an autonomous, self-regulating university sector.

⁹⁹ B. Bessant, 'Corporate management and its penetration of university administration and government', *The Australian Universities' Review*, Vol. 38, No. 1, 1995, pp. 59-62.

¹⁰⁰ S. Marginson & M. Considine, *The Enterprise University: Power, Governance and Reinvention in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 59.

Rather, the Dawkins policy discourse reframed the agenda by asking what governmental interests the university sector should attend to. This new policy discourse constructed a different understanding of academic freedom. Whereas the Murray Committee reinforced academic freedom as freedom from the responsibility for action in relation to the broader community outside the university walls, Dawkins linked freedom to responsibility in regard to particular actions the ends of which were to be determined – to a significant degree – by the state and external stakeholders.

The academic community responded to this new politics of scholarship in a relatively predictable fashion. Academic journals began to fill with articles and commentary that decried the Government's reform agenda. Dawkins was said to be trampling the cherished traditions, freedoms and practices of Australian universities and is so doing demonstrated an ignorance of what constituted a 'real' university and a lack of regard for academic freedom – the core condition of traditional liberal scholarship. In her thesis on the *Idea of the University in Australia*, Janet Sinclair-Jones investigates the academic community's response to the 'Dawkins Revolution':

It is the concern about the emphasis underlying all this, the tertiary sector's need to become more market driven and the notion that it bears a seemingly unequivocal responsibility to nation economic recovery-that has really struck at the heart of so many people with an interest in tertiary education. On the surface it seems that for a great number of the participants in the debate the issue is that this agenda seems to fly in the face of the very core of tertiary education – liberal education – and cannot be condoned. Much of the discussion has been concerned with a critique of both the growing priority of vocationally directed education as well as the perception that the competition for research funds is based upon identifiable and market valid outcomes. These criteria have been seen as a critical redirection, the operation of which, it is argued, have done irrevocable damage to the pursuit of the liberal arts in Australia and have transformed the very essence of the university¹⁰¹.

¹⁰¹ Sinclair Jones, p. 13

From the perspective of many commentators within the academic community, the social contract - developed in the post-war era as a consequence of the Murray Committee report - had been broken. Increased political control was unbalancing the relations between the universities and governments. The growing instrumentalism threatened the 'balanced development' of the students and the privilege accorded to the humanities. The linkage of research, particularly in science and technology, with national economic priorities challenged the discourse of disinterested knowledge or 'knowledge for its own sake'. Rather than being viewed as the effects of a new version of political liberalism, many academic commentators constituted the Dawkins reforms as a key moment in the progressive 'deliberalisation' of Australian Universities¹⁰². The freedom from interference that post war academics valorised as both a means and an end was being diminished by a set of beliefs and practices that expected political and economic subservience.

The Howard Years – the rise of the 'Enterprise University'.

The Keating Labor Government's defeat by the Howard Government at the 1996 election had major implications for higher education. This resulted initially from funding reductions rather than any seismic shifts in policy direction. In 1997, the Howard Government reduced the level of funding for each equivalent full-time student by one per cent. An additional three per cent cut was enacted in 1998 and a further one per cent reduction in 1999 and 2000¹⁰³. These reductions exacerbated successive decreases in university funding that had occurred in the late 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s. David Pennington indicates the extent to which the Commonwealth decreased the funding of universities during this period:

Recurrent funds per student in Australian universities peaked, in real terms, in 1965. Funding was to recover to a level close to this peak in 1975, but thereafter was subject to a prolonged squeeze, with a decrease of 8.6 per cent in recurrent

¹⁰² Symes et al, 2000.

¹⁰³ Jackson, 2003, p. 10

funds per equivalent full-time student (EFTS) between 1975 and 1987, and a decline in total funding over this period (including capital) of 22 per cent. This was followed by a further decrease in recurrent funding per EFTS of more than 6 percent through the Dawkins period. However, provision was made for renewed capital funding and growth of the system¹⁰⁴

These reductions in the operating resources introduced by the Howard Government were accompanied by major changes to the funding of research within the universities. In December 1999, the Government released a White Paper entitled *Knowledge and Innovation: a policy statement on research and research training*¹⁰⁵. The key features of the White Paper were:

- An enhanced role for the Australian Research Council (ARC)
- Performance based funding for research and research training in universities
- A new quality verification framework
- A collaborative research programme for rural and regional communities¹⁰⁶.

These initiatives were legislated for by the Australian Research Council Act 2001 and the Australian Research Council (Consequential and Transitional Provisions Act 2001).

Further changes in policy direction came in 2002 when the Minister for Education, Science and Training, (Dr Brendan Nelson) launched yet another review of the higher education sector. The review commenced in March 2002 and concluded in October 2002. The review attracted over 730 submissions and a total of 49 consultation forums

¹⁰⁴ D. Pennington, 'Australia's Universities – Through the Looking Glass', *Journal of Tertiary Education Administration*, Volume 13, No. 2, 1991, p. 109.

¹⁰⁵ Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *Knowledge and Innovation: A policy statement on research and research training*, AGPS, Canberra, 1999.

¹⁰⁶ Jackson, 2003.

were conducted involving approximately 800 participants¹⁰⁷. A 22 member reference group chaired by the Minister provided support and advice during the months of consultation and deliberation. This reference group included seven vice chancellors and a number of people representing business, industry, students, the indigenous community and the vocational education and training sectors¹⁰⁸. In 2003, the Government announced a package of reforms entitled *Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future*¹⁰⁹. The legislative framework for these reforms was introduced into Parliament on 17 September 2003 and passed on 5 December 2003¹¹⁰. The Nelson reforms incorporate three key elements. These are described by the Government as support for 'higher education providers', support for students and support for a diverse and equitable system¹¹¹.

The first element saw the Commonwealth replace block grants with the Commonwealth Grants Scheme (CGS). These arrangements extend the content of the negotiations between universities and the government beyond the question of quantum. In this regard the Government negotiates funding arrangements

... with each eligible higher education provider to deliver a specified number of commonwealth supported places in particular course disciplines¹¹².

This represented an increased level of Commonwealth intervention as the government repositions itself as a purchaser of educational services rather than the patron of a public university system. The Howard Government has argued that this intervention is

¹⁰⁷ Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), *Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future*, 2003, <http://www.backingaustraliasfuture.gov.au/policy.htm>, viewed 10 September 2005.

¹⁰⁸ DEST, 2003, p. 9

¹⁰⁹ DEST, 2003.

¹¹⁰ The Hon. Brendan Nelson, *Higher Education, Report for the 2004 to 2006 Triennium*, 2004, p. 3, http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/publications_resources/other_publications/higher_education_report_for_the_2004_to_2006_triennium.htm, viewed retrieved 12 September 2005.

¹¹¹ DEST, 2003.

¹¹² DEST, 2003, p. 12

necessary in order to ‘...provide the courses and the numbers of graduates that are needed by the nation’¹¹³.

One of the most significant points to note in relation to Nelson’s policy document *Our Universities – Backing Australia’s Future* is that the word university is rarely to be seen having been replaced by the term ‘higher education provider’. The Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee inquired into the provisions of the Higher Education Support Bill 2003 and noted that:

This new catchall terminology [higher education provider] has two main effects:

It emphasises a ‘purchaser-provider’ relationship between the Government as buying agency and institution as supplying agency, with the purchaser defining what it will (and will not) buy and the conditions under which it is prepared to buy.

It avoids distinguishing universities as having particular academic characteristics, and having statutory identity, or traditions of autonomy, and having characteristics which, in the public mind, distinguish them from commercial enterprises¹¹⁴.

Where the Murray committee sought to articulate the distinguishing characteristics and traditions of Australian universities, the Nelson reforms denied them any existence. In effect, these initiatives position the Minister as ‘director-general’ of higher education whilst simultaneously making obsolete the traditional basis upon which universities have defended themselves in regard to governmental interference.

Paradoxically, this increased intervention has been accompanied by a partial deregulation of higher education fees in that each university would be allowed to set its own student

¹¹³ DEST, 2003, p. 12

¹¹⁴ Commonwealth of Australia, *Hacking Australia’s Future, Threats to institutional autonomy, academic freedom and student choice in Australian higher education*, Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee, November 2003, p. 93, <http://www.backingaustraliasfuture.gov.au/glance.htm>, viewed 30 September 2005.

contribution fees within a range set by the Government. In effect, the Government has granted itself the right to prioritize the funding directed towards higher education places whilst reducing its capacity to state how much a student will contribute to their own education. In addition, the government has increased the number of full fee paying Australian undergraduate students that can be accepted into a course. This was initially set at 25% in 2002 but has been increased to 35% of domestic undergraduate places¹¹⁵.

The Government promised to increase its contribution per student place between 2005 and 2008. However, access to these increases was dependent upon the universities willingness to comply with its National Governance Protocols and demonstrate that they are adhering to the workplace reform agenda being imposed by the State. This provision requires universities to include a clause into their enterprise agreements that enables them to offer staff an individual employment agreement in accordance with *Workplace Relations Act 1996*¹¹⁶.

In addition to the funding of student places the Government has also introduced a number of initiatives aimed at developing what it constructs as a diverse and equitable system. Performance and incentive funding has been ‘... made available to encourage universities to differentiate their missions and to achieve reform in the areas of learning and teaching, equity, workplace productivity, collaboration and quality’¹¹⁷. In order to promote its ‘excellence’ agenda the Government has established a National Institute for learning and teaching in higher education. This institute undertakes benchmarking exercises and promulgate what it constructs as best practice in teaching, learning and

¹¹⁵ Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) *Backing Australia's Future*, Fact Sheet No. 3, *Commonwealth Grant Scheme – Growth in University Places*, 2004, p. 2, http://www.backingaustraliasfuture.gov.au/fact_sheets/3.htm, viewed 13 September 2005.

¹¹⁶ DEST, *Backing Australia's Future* Fact Sheet No. 12, *Creating Flexible and Effective Workplaces*, 2004, http://www.backingaustraliasfuture.gov.au/fact_sheets/12.htm, viewed 13 September 2005.

¹¹⁷ DEST, *Higher Education Reforms – at a Glance*, 2004, p.2, <http://www.backingaustraliasfuture.gov.au/glance.htm>, viewed 13 September 2005.

assessment. The Institute also coordinates national university teaching awards and the management of a competitive grants scheme for innovation in learning and teaching. Contingent funds are also being provided through a learning and teaching performance fund. This fund commenced with 54 million dollars in 2006. This will increase to 113 million dollars in 2008. The fund will 'reward those higher education providers that best demonstrate excellence in teaching and learning'¹¹⁸. Teaching and learning achievements are based on a number of performance indicators relating to student progress, graduate capabilities and employability.

The Government has invested additional funding to enhance its Graduate Destination Survey, Course Experience Questionnaire and Graduate Skills Assessment. The latter is a test of the generic skills of graduates. The Government argues that this tool should be used within recruitment processes and that it provides data to Government on the quality of higher education as measured by graduate skills¹¹⁹.

The extent of these reforms and their staggered implementation dates has been accompanied by a flurry of other papers. John Mullarvey, the current Chief Executive of the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC) notes that:

Since the passage of the Higher Education Support Act in 2003, the higher education sector has been the subject of an extraordinary number of discussion and consultation papers. These include *Building University Diversity*, *Research Quality Framework*, the discussion paper on Commonwealth and state responsibilities for universities and higher education, *Strengthening Standards in Offshore Education*, and the singling out of the university sector in the Government's workplace reforms agenda¹²⁰.

¹¹⁸ DEST, 2003, p. 29.

¹¹⁹ DEST, 2003.

¹²⁰ John Mullarvey, 'Are our universities losing their autonomy?' in *The Age*, June 16, 2005.

The Nelson reforms have increased the funds available for higher education, but made them more conditional or contingent on compliance with specific directives or at the very least with particular sentiments. These initiatives rely on a combination of policy directives and economic incentives. The Senate Committee noted the paradoxical nature of the Nelson reforms:

The Policy direction embodied in *Backing Australia's Future* would tear public investment out of the university sector and shift an unprecedented level of costs direct to students. As it is by no means certain that students are able or willing to take up this new cost burden, the new funding arrangements could be unsustainable. At the same time, in a contrary move, the Government's powers to direct the minutiae of daily academic and administrative decision-making in universities would rise in a manner unparalleled in the history of Australian education and unseen in other democratic countries¹²¹.

The Nelson Reforms continued the push to infuse universities with an entrepreneurial ethos. Within this frame, the practice of academic scholarship is no different from that which is undertaken by other 'knowledge workers' within the 'knowledge economy'. On this basis, the working conditions of academics should resemble those experienced by 'knowledge workers' in the private sector.

Marginson and Considine argue that the emergence of the so-called Enterprise University 'constitutes a new phase in the history of the university'¹²². These authors contend that:

In the Enterprise University, the economic and the academic dimensions are both subordinated to something else. Money is a key objective, but it is also the means to a more fundamental mission: to advance the prestige and competitiveness of the university as an end in itself.

¹²¹ Commonwealth of Australia, 2003, p. xix

¹²² S. Marginson & M. Considine, *The Enterprise University: Power, Governance and Reinvention in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 4.

The Nelson reforms encourage universities to compete with each other and internationally for funding that would address the resource issues posed by an ongoing withdrawal of Commonwealth monies from the higher education sector. In this regard, the Nelson reforms – both present and proposed – have the capacity to significantly change the fortunes and *modus operandi* of Australian universities. Nelson has instituted a range of initiatives, all of which seek to facilitate, prohibit or regulate particular behaviours on the part of students and university personnel. In effect, the contemporary politics of scholarship encourages individuals and groups to develop a strong sense of self-interest whilst simultaneously defining this as competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Mitchell Dean¹²³ has argued that the ethos of a program of government such as higher education is the point where the administrative and utopian dimensions of any governmental activity meet. In this regard we can examine the university in relation to ‘the world which is sought, the utopia to be won or the dystopia to be avoided, the kinds of beings we hope to become and to create’¹²⁴. The current utopias and dystopias for the ‘Enterprise University’ are provided by the discourse of globalisation.

This discourse views education as an international enterprise and thus as an activity situated within a global competitive market. In this regard the discourse of globalisation enables an increased focus on education as a source of a skilled workforce able to contribute to national economic competitiveness and as the site for the development of internationally portable qualifications¹²⁵. Now it can be allowed that universities have always played a role in developing graduates for the labour market. What is new in the ‘enterprise university’ is that higher education is seen as an export industry in its own

¹²³ M. Dean, ‘Powers of Life and Death beyond Governmentality’ in *Cultural Values*, Vol. 6, Nos. 1 & 2, 2002, pp.119-138.

¹²⁴ M Dean, 2002, p.120.

¹²⁵ G. McBurnie, ‘Globalization: A New Paradigm for Higher Education Policy in Higher Education’ in *Europe*, Vol. XXVI, No. 1., 2001, pp. 11-26.

right and that knowledge has been reconstituted as a 'tradeable' commodity. In a paper presented to the OECD, Michael Gallagher constructs the Enterprise University as an ideal type. From Gallagher's perspective, the enterprise university:

- Sets clear goals for itself
- Establishes diverse sources of income
- Provides commercially valuable services
- Plans for growth in total income
- Competes successfully in its markets
- Manages its cost drivers
- Employs flexible staffing strategies
- Responds to varying student needs and circumstances;
- Takes account of labour market requirements and employer needs;
- Embeds entrepreneurial skills and ethical values in course offerings;
- Participates in research commercialisation ventures;
- Manages intellectual property strategically¹²⁶.

Gallagher asserts that the notion of public universities becoming entrepreneurial incorporates a number of different dimensions and is occurring in a number of inter-related ways:

- a) as **multi-million dollar academic enterprises** earning income from diverse sources, developing new products and new markets, obtaining sound returns on investment and in so doing, adopting modern commercial practices – while striving to preserve longstanding academic values and collegial processes;
- b) as **knowledge contributors to the national innovation system** developing the processes for applying academic research, teaching and consulting services to invention and problem solving, including the growth of business and the cost-effective addressing of social and environmental problems – while valuing the broad pursuit of knowledge;
- c) as **producers of graduates with relevant capabilities** for their use as employees, self-employed professionals or employers, with increasing

¹²⁶ M. Gallagher, *The emergence of Entrepreneurial Public Universities in Australia*, paper presented at the IMHE General Conference of the OECD, Paris, September, 2000.

involvement of fee-paying learners in commercially-sponsored units of study and working in enterprise settings – while aiming to enable people to develop broad foundation learning skills for life; and

- d) as emergent organisations taking on new forms with flexible internal and external networks accommodating new sets of expertise, and with other universities and for-profit businesses, nationally and internationally, as partners in ventures of strategic alliances – while seeking to consolidate a coherent identity and establish cohesion within scholarly communities¹²⁷.

Although this was not explicitly stated, the notion of public universities ‘becoming’ entrepreneurial presupposed a critique of where they have been. This is particularly so in relation to the way they have been funded, their goals, conventions and management practices. In terms of finances, pre-entrepreneurial universities have been constructed as overly dependent on state finances. In the introduction to his policy paper Dawkins argued:

The society we want cannot be achieved without a strong economic base. In Australia this now requires a greatly increased export income, a far more favourable balance of trade than at present and a considerable reduction in our external debt¹²⁸.

In the issues paper *Setting Firm Foundations: Financing Australian Higher Education*, the current Minister for Education, Dr Brendan Nelson argues that ‘...whatever road we choose, the status quo cannot be considered to be a responsible option – although it may be the most attractive for veterans of university reform. ...A return to the days of full public funding of Australian universities will not occur. This would require a further \$4 billion annually of Commonwealth funding’¹²⁹. Making universities diversify their income streams and thus less dependent on Commonwealth funds is warranted by the discourse of fiscal

¹²⁷ Gallagher, 2000, p.1.

¹²⁸ Dawkins, 1988, p. 6.

¹²⁹ DEST, *Setting Firm Foundations: Financing Australian Higher Education*, 2002, http://www.backingaustraliasfuture.gov.au/publications/setting_firm_foundations/exec_summary.htm, viewed 25 September 2005, p. v.

responsibility promulgated by successive Governments and supranational organisations such as the OECD.

On the discourse of dependency, Frazer and Gordon argue that there is no longer any self-evidently 'good' adult dependency in post-industrial society¹³⁰. Whilst their discussion is aimed at the provision of social security payments to individual recipients, it is indicative of the valorisation of independence in contemporary Western political discourse. The construction of fiscal dependency as a negative state enables post-war commitments to investment in education to be construed as a form of 'welfare' that has encouraged a pathological way of thinking on behalf of educational institutions and those who work in them. In terms of the politics of scholarships, the freedom gained from secure funding is recast as a cost which the national community can ill-afford. Freedom-as-independence is constituted in terms of self sufficiency, not self-determination.

Likewise, the construction of entrepreneurial universities as adopting 'modern commercial management practices' constitutes the old university model as both antiquated and unsuitable for the times. The Hoare Committee's review of internal governance and management was significant in this regard. Gallagher uses this report to warrant the claim that the universities were being mismanaged. Gallagher states that the Hoare Report concluded 'universities were not giving adequate attention to equipping people in management positions with the skills needed to manage change, people and risk in an increasingly commercial and competitive environment. Nor were they seen to be coming to grips with the emerging need for more flexible workplaces and work practices'¹³¹. Similarly, the 1998 *Learning for life* report contended that universities continue to operate 'outdated governance arrangements, which emphasise representation

¹³⁰ N. Frazer & L. Gordon, 'A Genealogy of Dependency: Tracing a Keyword of the U.S. Welfare State', *Signs*, Vol. 19, No. 2, Winter, 1994, p. 309-336.

¹³¹ Gallagher, 2000, p. 24.

rather than experience and skills in the management of large enterprises¹³². These arrangements are constituted as 'hindering many institutions in pursuing their objectives'¹³³. More recently, Minister Nelson has argued that 'governance and management structures' lie at the heart of higher education's problems and that in some instances they are 'more appropriate to the past than they are to serving the needs of Australia in the future'¹³⁴.

Gallagher's valorisation of public enterprise universities as 'knowledge contributors', 'producers of graduates with relevant capabilities' and as 'organisations that take on new forms' in forging multiple links with outsiders' rejects the post-war university's claims to be a place apart, special in their needs and self-referential in their endeavours. Gumport notes that the legitimating idea of higher education as a social institution is based on very different premises to those of higher education as an industry in terms of what is valued, what is problematic and what is prescribed for improvement¹³⁵. Gallagher acknowledges this in his paper to the OECD. Thus Gallagher constructs the enterprise university as earning income from diverse sources, developing new products etc. – while striving to preserve longstanding, academic values and collegial processes. Similarly, he constitutes entrepreneurial universities as institutions which produce graduates with relevant capabilities – while aiming to enable people to develop broad foundational learning skills for life.

Whilst the acknowledgement of these competing tensions is important, Gallagher privileges the first stated preference, constructing it as something already achieved, while

¹³² Department of Education, Employment and Youth Affairs (DEETYA), *Learning for Life: Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy*, 1998, <http://www.dest.gov.au/archive/highered/herereview/herr.pdf>, viewed 27 September 2005.

¹³³ DEETYA, *Learning for Life*, p. 20.

¹³⁴ DEST, 2002, p. v.

¹³⁵ P. Gumport, 'Built to Serve: The Enduring Legacy of Public Higher Education', in P G Altbach, P J Gumport & D Bruce Johnstone (eds.), *In Defence of American Higher Education*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2001, pp. 85-109.

the second dimension is an afterthought which is framed as an aspiration hence the use of the terms striving for, aiming, seeking etc. It is reasonable to read this as support for contradictory values, practices and goals as long as they don't threaten those privileged within the utopian vision of the universities as business enterprises. In effect the 'official discourse' gives little purchase to the idea that universities should be organised in a way that privileges intellectual authority or recognition of academics as professionals that practice a vocation which accords them a set of inalienable rights in regard to the exercise of academic freedom. Gina Anderson argues that the reform of 'public' universities is underpinned by

... a belief in the appropriateness, and even the inescapability, of adopting private sector management styles and processes to better ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of universities. Within such documents, issues of traditional importance within the university, such as academic participation, democracy, and autonomy, are clearly secondary to aligning higher education with national wealth creation goals, and the establishment of a leaner, more economical higher education sector¹³⁶

Gallagher's work suggests a very clear sense of direction on behalf of the government. The ideal of the public entrepreneurial university is constituted as a response to the failures of the public nation-building university. These failures are numerous but they can all be understood as a failure waste management. Thus pre-entrepreneurial universities are constructed as 1) wasting resources by not aligning academic activity with university goals; 2) wasting productivity by failing to extract the highest possible level of work effort from academics; 3) wasting financial investment in education by failing to prepare students to compete in the labour market and 4) wasting opportunities by failing to turn the intellectual capital of academics into commercially rewarding products.

¹³⁶ G. Anderson, *Playing Their Game: An Exploration of Academic Resistance in the Managerial University*, Ph.D Thesis, University of Western Sydney, 2005, pp 202-203.

Higher education as an exercise in waste management is constituted in and through the ubiquitous discourse of efficiency and effectiveness that circulates in and through public and private institutions on an every-day basis. In effect, the discourse of efficiency and effectiveness warrants the rise of the management imperative in terms of organisational goals, institutional decision making and the performance of academic activity. In an often cited journal article on the progressive McDonalization of universities, Parker and Jary argue that higher education in the United Kingdom and elsewhere has borne witness to a number of changes including a significant increase in managerial power, more emphasis on marketing and business generation, moves towards performance related pay and a rationalisation and computerisation of administrative structures¹³⁷.

In effect, the discourse of the 'Enterprise University' constructs a politics of scholarship which privileges a market-like cost-benefit analysis in relation to both the management of universities and the actions of academics. Within this worldview, academics are free to make choices that maximise their personal outcomes and those of the institutions that employ them. However, it is important to understand that individual and organisational change is an accomplishment, something that has to be achieved or actualised through practice. Pritchard and Willmott acknowledge the complexity of universities and their change efforts in their response to the arguments presented by Parker and Jary:

Management discourse – with its demands for managerial relations and manager/managed identities and increased control over activities – is certainly available to senior post-holders and has been enthusiastically embraced by some of their number. However, many of them are themselves subject to existing discursive regimes and localised practices which have a strong medicating effect on the reception and articulation of 'management' disciplines. Thus whatever 'transition' may be occurring, it is likely to be patchy, extended, and incomplete¹³⁸.

¹³⁷ M. Parker & D. Jary, 'The McUniversity: Organization, management and academic subjectivity'. *Organization*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1995, p. 320.

¹³⁸ C. Prichard & H. Willmott, 'Just How Managed is the McUniversity?' in *Organization Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1997, p. 311.

Indeed, Gallagher notes differences in the reconstruction of Australian public universities as entrepreneurial institutions arguing that there are 'leaders and learners', 'pace setters and followers'. In addition, Gallagher contends that universities have developed different responses to the pressures to become entrepreneurial.

Chapter Summary

Australian universities are markedly different to those founded in the era of federation. Although subject to almost continual change, the past 50 years or so have been particularly frenetic. The immediate post-war years witnessed the development of a social contract of sorts which facilitated increased investment in universities whilst maintaining a relatively high degree of institutional autonomy. In this period, the tradition of 'liberal' scholarship was given great expression. Freedom was both a means to an end and an end in itself. In effect, freedom (constituted as the absence of interference) was an enabling condition for the practice of good scholarship. Good scholarship was constituted as being 'objective', 'impartial' and 'disinterested'. In regard to the students, the end of a liberal education was the absence of ignorance or freedom from immaturity in the form of an undisciplined mind or a short-sighted perspective. For all those involved in the reformation of higher education in the post-war years, negative freedom was the mark of a liberal university.

The Dawkins era instituted a neo-liberal reconstruction of higher education incorporating a shift from elite to a mass system, an increase in managerial modes of governance (both internally and externally) and a greater use of competitive markets in resource allocation¹³⁹. The notion of 'balanced development' gave way to economic utility and organisational efficiency as key organising principles for the newly formed unified national system. The scholarly activity of academics was linked directly to the interests of the nation and for the most part this was defined in economic terms.

¹³⁹ S. Marginson, 'Towards a Politics of the Enterprise University', S Cooper, J Hinkson & G Sharp (eds.), *Scholars and Entrepreneurs*, Arena Publications, North Carlton, 2000, pp. 109-137.

The rise to political power by the Howard Government saw continuities and discontinuities in the policies and trends relating to universities. There was a continued emphasis on the economics of universities. However, this emphasis was sharpened by a Ministerial agenda which constituted higher education as an industry in its own right. Universities and individual academics were encouraged to become intellectual hustlers in the marketplace. In terms of the politics of scholarship, the entrepreneurial vision constructs academic freedom as the freedom to compete.

For a college or university to accept its civic responsibilities ... we must consider three things: (1) the expectations we have of ourselves as scholars and administrators; (2) our aspirations for our students; and (3) the nature and intentions of our own institutional relationships with the broader society of which we seek to be an integral part¹⁴⁰.

Chapter Two: Public Scholarship and the Exercise of Academic Freedom

The emergence of the so called 'enterprise university' has raised concerns about the intellectual climate of universities and the prospects for academic freedom¹⁴¹. At issue here is the role and purpose of universities and the kinds of teaching and research practices they enable or constrain. In this chapter I want to address the arguments which constitute in Castoriadis¹⁴² terms an 'imaginary' as alternative to the way current debates and ideas frame academic scholarship and academic freedom. As I show there are a variety of commentators with an interest in promoting the idea that universities and the academics who work in them have an obligation to engage in public scholarship and act as a source of social criticism. However, as will become clear, how this is both thought about and acted out depends on a number of things including the discursive effects of ideas like power and freedom.

Universities as 'Public' Institutions

Seamus Miller argues that the significance of academic freedom is '... relative to a particular conception of the university as an institution, and more specifically, to a

¹⁴⁰ J. Ramaley, 'Embracing Civic Responsibility', in *Campus Compact Reader*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, Fall, 2000, p. 1.

¹⁴¹ Commonwealth of Australia, *Universities in Crises: Report into the capacity of public universities to meet Australia's higher education needs*, Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee, September, 2001, retrieved 3 October 2004, <
http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/EET_CTTE/public%20uni/report/contents.htm.

¹⁴² Cornelius Castoriadis used this term in his book *The Imaginary Institution of Society*. Trans. Kathleen Blamey. Cambridge, MA, Polity Press, 1987.

particular view of the purpose of universities'¹⁴³. Universities have had ascribed to them a range of purposes throughout their history. One set of ascriptions has focussed on universities and their role in the conservation, transmission and advancement of knowledge¹⁴⁴. Universities have also been called on to do applied research or assist in the supply of vocational skills and professional knowledge¹⁴⁵. More recently, the emergence of post-industrial societies has seen the university move to centre stage as a key institution within the so-called knowledge economy. This shift has placed into question the value of knowledge, how knowledge is to be conceptualised and what sustains it¹⁴⁶.

For many the discourses of globalism and entrepreneurialism constitute a perversion of long established values and conceptions of knowledge. Thus, one response to the rise of the 'Enterprise University' has been to restate what are identified as the traditional values and understandings that underpin the idea of a university. In this way critics such as Raymond Gaita¹⁴⁷ and Tony Coady¹⁴⁸ valorise knowledge for its own sake, position the university as 'a place apart', one that is beyond any constituency other than its own

¹⁴³ S. Miller, 'Academic Autonomy' in T. Coady (ed), *Why Universities Matter*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2000, p. 115.

¹⁴⁴ See for example, R. Davis, 'The unbalancing of Australian Universities', in J. Biggs & R. Davis, Eds., *The Subversion of Australian Universities*, 2002, <http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/dissent/documents/sau/>; R. Gaita, 'The University: Is It Finished', in S. Cooper, J. Hinkson & G. Sharp (Eds.), *Scholars and Entrepreneurs: The universities in crisis*, Arena Publications, North Carlton, 2002, pp. 91-108.

¹⁴⁵ See for example, A. Gilbert, *The Idea of a University: Enterprise or Academy* paper presented to The Manning Clark Symposium, Canberra, 25 July 2001, <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/vc/present/manningclark.pdf>.

¹⁴⁶ Mary Henkel, 'Academic Identity and Autonomy Revisited', in I. Bleiklie & M. Henkel (eds.) *Governing Knowledge: A Study of Continuity and Change in Higher Education – A Festschrift in Honour of Maurice Kogan*, Springer, New York, 2005, p. 161

¹⁴⁷ Raymond Gaita, 'Truth and the idea of a university' in *Australian Universities Review*, Volume 40, No 1, 1997.

¹⁴⁸ Tony Coady, 'Universities and Ideals of Inquiry', in Tony Coady (ed), *Why Universities Matter*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2000.

‘community of scholars’ and privilege academic freedom as a form of protection or respite from the everyday pressures of the world.

A different response has come from other critics who contend that both the traditional and the entrepreneurial models effect an extreme narrowing of the idea of the university, the roles that it can and should play, and the constituencies to whom they relate. I am one of those critics.

The dichotomising of the debate into a traditional versus entrepreneurial binary positions us between the proverbial ‘rock and a hard place’ inviting us to choose between elitism and social isolation or economic instrumentalism and servitude to the market. Both of these options may better be understood as supporting an excessive privatism that diminishes what is public about public universities. Those who support the traditional university model construct academic work as an activity that best occurs in ‘splendid isolation’, removed from any engagement with the public or publics beyond the university wall. In this regard, academic activity is to be conducted outside of the public gaze and at a distance from public affairs. The conversation is private in that it is restricted to the initiated. On this account, freedom is constructed in negative terms i.e. Freedom from interference in the form of demands to be useful or an assertion of authority by someone outside the institution. This model provides an intensely privatised kind of scholarship obligated only to preserve a regard for some ‘great tradition’ of intellectual effort.

The entrepreneurial model gives rise to an equivalent privatism in that it is based on the normative assumption that the outcomes of academic activity are private goods that benefit individual entities be they a student or a corporation. In other words, the private interests of individual stakeholders are given primacy within this construction. Academic activity is judged on the basis of immediate and tangible goods which are divisible to an individual basis and disbursed accordingly. Within this perspective,

freedom is constructed in positive terms but is bound by economic considerations. Academics are free to compete, to engage and negotiate with the market and cashed-up stake-holders.

In contrast to these models, there are those who promote the ‘imaginary’ of ‘university as agora’¹⁴⁹. Zygmunt Bauman presents such a construction of the agora as a public space that is in-between the purely political space of the legislative arena and the private space of personal interest. Bauman characterises this in-between space by way of a set of categories and distinctions which can be expressed in the form of an ancient triptych¹⁵⁰:

<i>Ekklesia</i> (political assembly)	<i>Agora</i> (public space)	<i>Oikos</i> (private household)
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Bauman explains the significance of each of these spheres and the relationship between them:

The distinction between private and public spheres is of ancient origin; it goes back to the Greek *oikos*, the household, and *ekkesia*, the site of politics, where matters affecting all members of the polis are tackled and settled. But between *oikos* and *ekkesia* the Greeks situated one more sphere, that of communication between the two; the sphere whose major role was not keeping the private and the public apart and guarding the territorial integrity of each, but assuring a smooth and constant traffic between them. That third and intermediate sphere, the agora, bound the two extremes and held them together. Its role was crucial for the maintenance of a truly autonomous polis resting on the true autonomy of its members. Without it, neither the polis nor its members could gain, let alone retain, their freedom to decide the meaning of their common good and what was to be done to attain it¹⁵¹.

¹⁴⁹ J. Nixon, ‘Imagining Ourselves into Being: conversing with Hannah Arendt’, *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, Volume 9, Number 2, 2001, pp. 221-236

¹⁵⁰ This table is adapted from one provide by J. Nixon, ‘Imagining Ourselves into Being: conversing with Hannah Arendt’, *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, Volume 9, Number 2, 2001, p. 222.

¹⁵¹ Z. Bauman, ‘In Search of Politics’, cited in Nixon, 2001, pp. 222-223

In this regard, universities are institutional spaces where a range of interest, including their own, can be identified, acknowledged and held to account. As Edward Said argues, universities do not exist to adjudicate on social-political tensions, but rather as places 'to understand them, to understand them in their origin and to understand them in the way they are going'. What universities offer is a space where intellectual processes of rigorous inquiry or rational debate can take place. When universities act as public spaces for public discourse, they enable us, in the words of Hannah Arendt, 'to think what we do'. At their best, well functioning public universities contribute to and enable an open and rigorous conversation about who we are, how we live and what kind of society we want. In this regard, it enables people to be animated participants and to take a stake in the world rather than subject spectators who are left to observe from the sideline.

As writers such as Hannah Arendt acknowledge, this is a difficult task. Human action occurs in a complex of arrangements and relations, we can never know in advance the entirety of its outcomes, 'no act, no matter how noble and unselfish and beneficial for some, can be truly insured against hurting those who may find themselves, inadvertently, on its receiving end'¹⁵². This complexity, this ambivalence can not be responded to by turning away. The task, as Jon Nixon argues, is to stay with the problem, to keep open a public space that enables us to think with and against the grain, to work towards new forms of intellectual and social practice and new commitments¹⁵³.

As 'public' institutions, universities have a key role to play in maintaining the openness of democratic politics and the representativeness of governments in our society. In representative democracies, properly functioning public universities enable '... forms of

¹⁵² Z. Bauman, 'Postmodern Ethics', cited in J. Nixon, 'Professional Renewal as a Condition of Institutional Change: rethinking academic work', in *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, Volume 13, Number 1, 2003, p.10

¹⁵³ J. Nixon, 'Professional Renewal as a Condition of Institutional Change: rethinking academic work', in *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, Volume 13, Number 1, 2003, pp 3-15.

participation in public affairs that are educative'¹⁵⁴ in the twofold sense that they 1) enable us to comprehend the diversity of perspectives, experiences and needs within our polity and 2) provide us with opportunities to practice political freedom, to develop the skills, knowledge and dispositions that enable us to take a stake in the world as active citizens. In other words, properly functioning public universities create opportunities for citizen participation and community involvement in a broad range of human endeavours; give voice to a wide range of viewpoints and lived experiences; contribute to the responsiveness and transparency of decision-making; make visible the consequences of collective human action; and provide a check on centralised authority, including their own¹⁵⁵.

Simon Marginson, the most prolific contemporary writer on higher education in Australia, lends support to this counter-imaginary. He argues that 'In the context of a newly democratized relationship with the community, external relations would no longer be regulated by governmental technologies, marketing and a handful of business leaders in cultural synergy with the vice-chancellor'¹⁵⁶. Rather:

Politically active external constituencies that connect to various groups of students and staff inside the university would undercut the executive monopoly of internal/external links. This would render collegial cultures socially accountable and explode the vacuity of the consumer paradigm. It might provide a way out of the empty safety of the utilitarian trap. Universities can be reduced to narrow and short-term vocational purposes only while their accountability is confined to governments, large employers and themselves. It is this closed circle—that sustains commodity production in the Enterprise

¹⁵⁴ M. Olssen 'The restructuring of tertiary education in New Zealand: Governmentality, neo-liberalism, democracy', *McGill Journal of Education*, Winter 2002, p. 74.

¹⁵⁵ I take this argument from Mark Olssen's account of representative institutions in 'The restructuring of tertiary education in New Zealand: Governmentality, neo-liberalism, democracy', *McGill Journal of Education*, Winter 2002.

¹⁵⁶ S. Marginson, 'Towards a politics of the Enterprise University', *Arena Journal*, Issue. 17-18, Spring, 2002, p. 116.

University, and the utilitarianism that supports it. To invigorate the university we will need a public culture that values intellectual and aesthetic life, diversity and knowledge, and universities that are committed not to themselves, but to the heterogeneous range of social products¹⁵⁷.

Against this backdrop of an alternative to the privatism of traditionalists and entrepreneurs it is now possible to say more about the idea of public scholarship constituted as the appropriate kind of teaching and research which universities as public spaces might foster and promote. In spelling out what characterises public scholarship it is important to indicate that this conception is hardly a novel idea and also that the idea depends on a rethink of the traditional liberal construction of academic freedom.

The achievement of public scholarship is demanding in that it requires academics to manifest integrity, humility and courage. In this regard, the prospect for public scholarship is dependent on a reconceptualised notion of academic professionalism, which is itself based on an alternative notion of academic freedom. Indeed, public scholarship requires an ethical turn whereby academic responsibility and freedom are interconnected. Mary Beattie spells out the connections between an academic professionalism based on responsibility and an outward looking, externally referential, other-centred notion of academic freedom. This reconceptualised academic professionalism is:

... grounded in relationships with students, research participants, and colleagues, and positions learning – the student's, the community member's and the academics own learning – at the heart of academic endeavour. Thus, the traditional notion of academic freedom as the academic's right to pursue his or her own research, and to teach according to his or her own interests, is overturned, and replaced with a conception based on interdependence, connectedness and responsiveness to others. In the reconfigured relationships which result from this conception, individuals share interpretations and worldviews, seek to understand and to enter the other's perspective, and work to create shared meanings. In so doing, individuals can collaborate not only in the creation of shared knowledge but also in the creation of a learning community based on shared purposes and

¹⁵⁷ S. Marginson, 2002, p. 117.

visions. This conception of a relational self supports the idea that it is only through respectful dialogue and conversations with multiple others in our educational settings that we come to know ourselves and others, and to transform our understandings, our knowledge and our communities¹⁵⁸.

Beattie rejects the cult of professionalism that positions academics as intellectual experts, unencumbered by regard to matters of ethics, the play of power or the allure of privilege. This is a rejection of an academic professionalism that is 'wedded to a sterile objectivity', an objectivity that 'largely serves to justify a retreat into a world of banal academic rituals and unapologetic escapism'¹⁵⁹. Beattie contends that disinterest should be replaced with commitment. This resonates with the work of Pierre Bourdieu and his call for academics to reclaim the role of engaged social agent. Bourdieu believed that intellectuals, including academics 'have a fearsome form of social responsibility'¹⁶⁰.

Bourdieu was critical of much of what constitutes academic activity in the modern era. Henry Giroux identifies Bourdieu's key contributions to the higher education debate:

According to Bourdieu, academics had to not only engage in a permanent critique of the abuses of authority in the media and society, but also address the deadening scholasticism that often characterized work in the academy. This was not simply a call for them to renounce the all too common form of political irrelevance rooted in the mantra of professional objectivity, neutrality and distance that inveighed against connecting higher education to the public realm and scholarship to larger social issues, but also an attempt to convince intellectuals that their own participation in the public realm should never take place at the expense of their artistic, intellectually rigorous, or theoretical skills. The meaning of what it meant to be a public intellectual could not serve as an excuse for either a narrow scholasticism, anti-intellectualism, or withdrawal into scholarship. Nor is assuming the role of an intellectual for the public, an excuse to substitute celebrity-like, public relations posturing for the important work of providing

¹⁵⁸ J. Nixon, M. Beattie, M. Challis & M. Walker, 'What does it Mean to be an Academic? A Colloquium', in *Teaching in Higher Education*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1998, p. 284.

¹⁵⁹ H. Giroux & S. Searles Giroux, *Take Back Higher Education: Race, Youth, and the Crises of Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Era*, Palgrave, 2004, p. 54.

¹⁶⁰ C. Stabile & J. Morooka, 'Between Two Evils, I Refuse to Choose the Lesser', *Cultural Studies*, 1/(3/4), 2003, p. 326.

alternative, rigorous analyses and engaging important social issues through individual and collective struggles. Bourdieu wanted intellectuals-academic and non-academic alike- to organize and become a collective force for fighting against a range of injustices ... and transforming the neoliberal state into an inclusive democracy¹⁶¹.

Bourdieu was critical of the insularity of much academic work and of academics who mistook 'academic revolutions' for revolutions in the order of things¹⁶². From Bourdieu's perspective too many academics mistake verbal sparring at conferences for real interventions in public affairs. Bourdieu encouraged scholars and researchers to transcend 'the sacred frontier' that forms the border of the 'academic microcosm'. Bourdieu wrote 'I have come to think that those who have the opportunity to devote their life to the study of the social world cannot remain neutral or indifferent, distanced from those struggles where the future of the world is at stake'.

Clearly, those who take this standpoint reject the common place assumption that academic work can and should be disengaged from public affairs. Indeed, some recent contributors to the higher education debate have sought to reclaim an explicitly public standpoint. Terms such as 'community engagement' and 'public scholarship' (the latter a primarily North American term) are used to describe this perspective. For example, the Centre for Community Engagement at the University of North Dakota defines public scholarship as:

... scholarly and creative work in the public interest, scholarship planned and carried out with community or public partners, and scholarship that produces a "public good" such as exhibits, performances, and broadly accessible research results¹⁶³.

¹⁶¹ H. Giroux & S. Searles Giroux, 2004, pp. 54-55.

¹⁶² H. Giroux & S. Searles Giroux, 2004, pp. 54-55.

¹⁶³ Centre for Community Engagement, *Opportunities in Public Scholarship*, University of North Dakota, retrieved 7 November 2005, <<http://learn.aero.und.edu/pages.asp?PageID=71231>,>

The Association of Commonwealth Universities¹⁶⁴, a global network of over 480 universities (including many in Australia), produced a discussion paper in April 2001 entitled *Engagement as a Core Value for the University*¹⁶⁵. In doing this the Association hoped to reignite a long overdue debate on two fundamental questions raised by Mary Henkel in her contribution to the book *Governing Knowledge*. Henkel asks ‘What are the characteristics of universities that make them “socially useful” and in what terms economic, political, social, moral is the idea of social usefulness to be understood?’¹⁶⁶,

The Association’s paper identifies the university as a site for different types of scholarship including:

- *Discovery* which contributes to the stock of human knowledge and to the intellectual climate of the institution. This is the closest to research in the classical sense;
- *Integration* or *synthesis* is the work which seeks to interpret, draw together and bring new insights to bear on original research, it reaches across disciplinary boundaries and brings information together in creative and innovative ways;
- The *application* or *practice* of the outcomes of discovery and integration enables the knowledge and understanding to be applied to problems of higher education itself and of society;
- *Teaching* includes not only transmitting, but transforming and extending knowledge on the basis both of appropriate knowledge of the discipline but also

¹⁶⁴ Hereafter called the Association.

¹⁶⁵ Association of Commonwealth Universities, *Engagement as a Core Value for the University*: a consultation document, <http://www.acu.ac.uk/policyandresearch/research/engagement.pdf>, viewed 21 June 2005.

¹⁶⁶ Mary Henkel, ‘Academic Identity and Autonomy Revisited’, in I. Bleiklie & M. Henkel (eds.) *Governing Knowledge: A Study of Continuity and Change in Higher Education – A Festschrift in Honour of Maurice Kogan*, Springer, New York, 2005, p. 161.

encompasses what it is that makes for effective teaching and learning in the discipline concerned¹⁶⁷.

The Association argues that academic life in the new millennium is no longer pursued in seclusion (if it ever was) and that the notion of knowledge for its own sake is too self-interested to be defensible. However, this is not to suggest that the Association views universities in purely economic terms. Whilst acknowledging the role of the university in the knowledge economy, the report also stresses that academic activity needs to address itself to social issues and that universities have local, regional and national responsibilities that should not be discarded in the face of an increased focus on globalism or internationalism. In this regard the association suggests that a university's status as a privileged institution gives them responsibilities as 'neighbours and citizens'¹⁶⁸. Universities must endeavour to be 'recognised and approached as reservoirs of resources that can contribute to the whole range of local and community activity:

- 'Individual academics need every encouragement to join in local initiatives, task groups, steering groups, fundraising committees, and, particularly perhaps boards of governance ...
- Universities' specific expertise – economic, sociological, historical, technological, cultural can be made freely available to community not-for-profit ventures that can use it. It is a matter not only of responding to requests but of being aware of where such needs may arise. ...
- Universities have big reserves of cultural energy and cultural capital. As well as making facilities available to the surrounding community, they can promote joint artistic and cultural initiatives.'¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Association of Commonwealth Universities, 2001, p. 9. This construction of scholarship was detailed by Ernest Boyer in his 1990 report to the Carnegie Foundation entitled *Scholarship Reconsidered*.

¹⁶⁸ Association of Commonwealth Universities, 2001, p. 7.

¹⁶⁹ Association of Commonwealth Universities, 2001, p. 37.

Michael Gibbons, as Secretary-General of the Association, argues that the obligation to engage in civic participation requires more than willing involvement in local, regional and national affairs. Rather, their civic obligations require them to expose their research results and the resulting policy and technological implications 'not just to traditional peer reviews but to the rough and tumble of public debate'¹⁷⁰. Knowledge, Gibbons says, 'has to have survived the test of public debate in the arena of everyday argument to achieve the robustness it needs to be useful'¹⁷¹.

The public testing of knowledge gives academics the chance to examine the extent to which their work resonates with the lived experience, values and aspirations of the various publics that make up a nation state. In this regard, public scholarship democratizes knowledge practices. James Bohman provides support for this argument when he says:

In a democracy, all must be able to exercise their reason 'without let or hindrance', and not simply appeal as subjects to authorized agents who respond in light of their own criteria and grant entitlements in exchange for cooperation within existing practices. In some cases it is necessary not only to criticize such norms, but also to change the practices themselves.

... improved democratic practices provide the context for the development of essential human power and freedoms, and fruitfully check the normative powers of institutions with the creative powers of thought and communication¹⁷².

The positioning of engagement as a 'core value' of university and academic activity is based on a dialogical approach to scholarship that is far removed from the image of the university as an ivory tower, drip feeding an ignorant and subservient public who should be grateful for whatever is given to them. Jurgen Habermas supports the idea of public scholarship in arguing that 'when intellectuals using arguments sharpened by rhetoric,

¹⁷⁰ Association of Commonwealth Universities, 2001, p. 38.

¹⁷¹ Association of Commonwealth Universities, 2001, p. 38.

¹⁷² J. Bohman, 'We, Heirs of Enlightenment: Critical Theory, Democracy and Social Science', *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 13(3), 2005, p. 375

intervene on behalf of rights that have been violated and truths that have been suppressed, reforms that are overdue and progress that has been delayed, they address themselves to a public sphere that *is capable of response, alert and informed*¹⁷³. In this regard, public scholarship, particularly in the form of community engagement, requires and has the potential to foster new modes of knowledge production that transgress traditional, institutional and disciplinary boundaries to knowledge formation. Within these new modes:

Knowledge is generated in the context of application. ...it involves participants with different forms of knowledge collaborating in flexible and short-lived organisational structures to define problems and strategies for their solution¹⁷⁴.

The mode of knowledge production implied by community engagement is not haphazard. Although it should start ‘from the intellectual frameworks of the participants’ it is also informed by theoretical considerations and an understanding of the assumptions and limitations of various approaches to research¹⁷⁵. This exchange of knowledge holds the prospect for new frameworks of understanding to emerge. Thus community engagement as a core value of the public university has the potential for collaborative work which leaves neither the community nor the university unaffected. We cannot ‘take the world in full seriousness’¹⁷⁶, not just as a site for or object of research, without changing the traditional conceptions and practices of knowledge production that have dominated western universities since the Enlightenment.

¹⁷³ J. Habermas, *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians’ Debate*, Shierry Weber Nicholson (Ed., Trans.), MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989, p. 73

¹⁷⁴ Berit Askling, Mary Henkel & Barbara Kehm, ‘Concepts of knowledge and their Organisation in Universities’, in *European Journal of Education*, Vol. 36, No. 3, 2001, p. 342.

¹⁷⁵ Askling, Henkel & Kehm, p. 342

¹⁷⁶ Association of Commonwealth Universities, 2001, p. 38.

George Fallis complements the work of the Association of Commonwealth Universities by exploring the significance of public scholarship for democratic politics¹⁷⁷. Fallis argues that as well as living in 'post-industrial societies' we also live in democratic societies and that universities have a democratic mission. This democratic mission is to be found in all aspects of the university's activities. Fallis outlines the relationship between the different spheres of action encompassed within the university and the maintenance of democratic politics and is worth quoting at length:

Undergraduate education is, in part, an education for political citizenship. The universities are the gateways to the professions, and democracy requires equality of access to the professions. Furthermore, the practice of all professions involves an imbalance between the professional and the client; and virtually all professions have been granted self-regulation rather than being regulated by government. Therefore, in a democratic society, it is important that all professionals be attentive to the issues of the client's interest and the public interest. The university shares the responsibility to educate professionals for this attentiveness, on behalf of our democracy¹⁷⁸.

Fallis also argues that in our society, political choices require deliberation and a thorough assessment of complex problems and their possible solutions. Sometimes a university's contribution can come from the natural sciences¹⁷⁹. At other times, the assessment can involve knowledge and understandings generated by the social sciences or the humanities. As a final point, Fallis says that 'the multiversity as a research institution, financed by our democratic governments, is crucial in the dynamic of generating new ideas'¹⁸⁰. In this regard 'The universities have a democratic obligation to ask what

¹⁷⁷ G. Fallis, *The Mission of the University*, <http://www.cou.on.ca/content/objects/The%20Mission%20V3.pdf>, 2004, viewed 12 August 2005.

¹⁷⁸ Fallis, 2004, p. 42

¹⁷⁹ Fallis, 2004, p. 43.

¹⁸⁰ Fallis, 2004, p. 43.

questions are being studied, and to assess the impact of new knowledge. They must ask: ideas for whom?’¹⁸¹.

In summary, Fallis argues that ‘... the fundamental democratic purpose of the university is protection against the democratic tyranny of ideas’¹⁸². This practice of challenging orthodox ideas or received wisdom is often associated with the activities of Socrates and his followers in Ancient Greece and thus with the very beginnings of a western tradition of higher education. Socrates was known for his endless questioning of the political and social life of Athens. Rahman calls upon this ‘tradition’ when he argues:

Critical inquiry is ... the very life blood of a university; where there is too much complacency, a university degenerates into bureaucracy. ... It is incumbent upon us therefore, to honor the socratic legacy, and to follow the example of the gadfly in never passing up an opportunity to exercise our critical faculties¹⁸³.

One of the clearest expositions of the university’s role in political and social action is provided in the Kalven Committee Report. This report was commissioned by George Beadle, the President of the University of Chicago in 1967¹⁸⁴. The report was a response to those calling for the university to take a stand against the American Government’s involvement in the Vietnam War. The report states that committee members ‘... found a deep consensus on the appropriate role of the university in political and social action. It senses some popular misconceptions about the role and wishes, therefore, simply to reaffirm a few old truths and a cherished tradition’. The committee position the ‘... discovery, improvement and dissemination of knowledge’ as central to the university’s mission but stress that its ‘domain of inquiry and scrutiny includes all aspects and all

¹⁸¹ Fallis, 2004, p. 43

¹⁸² Fallis, 2004, p. 43

¹⁸³ M. M. Rahman, *The Betrayal of the Intellect in Higher Education*, Omniview Publishing, Toronto, 1997, p. 3.

¹⁸⁴ Kalven Committee, *Report on the University’s Role in Political and Social Action*, 1967, <http://www.uchicago.edu/docs/policies/provostoffice/kalvept.pdf>, viewed 2 November 2005.

values of society¹⁸⁵. In this regard any arrangements that promotes a closure of scrutiny or critique of any aspect of society or its social/political values must be viewed as perverting the mission or role of the university:

A university faithful to its mission will provide enduring challenges to social values, policies, practices and institutions. By design and by effect, it is the institution which creates discontent with the existing social arrangements and proposes new ones. In brief, a good university, like Socrates, will be upsetting¹⁸⁶.

The committee took pains to specify that the role of social critic and conscience was the proper role of individual academics, not of the university as an entity in its own right. The Kalven Committee state, 'The instrument of dissent and criticism is the individual faculty member or the individual student. The university is the home and sponsor of critics; it is not itself the critic'¹⁸⁷. If the university, as an institution were to take a position on a public issue it would invariably be foreclosing the diversity of views held by its 'community of scholars' and therefore would be guilty of imposing a 'tyranny of ideas' and acting in a way that is harmful to democratic politics. In this regard, the university:

...cannot insist that all of its members favour a given view of social policy; if it takes collective action, therefore it does so at the price of censoring any minority who do not agree with the view adopted. In brief, it is a community which cannot resort to majority vote to reach positions on public issues¹⁸⁸.

Overall, universities must maintain institutional neutrality whilst supporting individual commitment:

The neutrality of the university as an institution arises then not from a lack of courage nor out of indifference and insensitivity. It arises out of respect for free

¹⁸⁵ Kalven Committee, p.1, emphasis in the original.

¹⁸⁶ Kalven Committee, p. 1.

¹⁸⁷ Kalven Committee, p. 1.

¹⁸⁸ Kalven Committee, p. 1.

inquiry and the obligation to cherish a diversity of viewpoints. And this neutrality as an institution has its complement in the fullest freedom for its faculty and students as individuals to participate in political action and social protest. It finds its complement, too, in the obligation of the university to provide a forum for the most searching and candid discussion of public issues¹⁸⁹.

For the Kalven Committee, the university's greatest responsibility was to maintain an environment that enabled the practice of political freedom understood as the act of initiating change in the social arrangements that constitute the conditions of our existence, who people can be, what they can do and how they can think in the world. As I will argue later in this chapter, these arrangements may also relate to the conditions that define academic work itself. This perspective is supported by Hayward who suggests that the exercise of freedom represents the capacity '... enabled and constrained to varying degrees by particular relations of power, to act, not only within, but also upon, or in ways that affect, the mechanisms of power that shape... fields of possibility'¹⁹⁰. Put simply, the *political* practice of freedom involves challenging existing power relations and their effects.

New Zealand has enshrined the role of critic and conscience in legislation. According to Section 162 (4) (a) (v) of the *Education Act 1989*, New Zealand's universities are to be understood as distinct from other tertiary institutions in that they manifest all of the following characteristics:

- (i) They are primarily concerned with more advanced learning, the principal aim being to develop intellectual independence:
- (ii) Their research and teaching are closely interdependent and most of their teaching is done by people who are active in advancing knowledge:
- (iii) They meet international standards of research and teaching:

¹⁸⁹ Kalven Committee, p. 12.

¹⁹⁰ Clarissa Rile Hayward, *De-facing Power*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 2000, p. 166.

- (iv) They accept a role as critic and conscience of society¹⁹¹;

As with the Kalven Report the New Zealand Vice Chancellors Committee (NZVCC) locates the practice of criticism with academics themselves rather than with the institution. In its response to the Tertiary Education Review, the NZVCC argued:

University academics themselves are under an obligation to bring to public attention, through public debate, issues on which they have a contribution to make informed by their research. Not all criticism need be adverse. But the tension between universities being, on the one hand funded by the state, and on the other, free to challenge the state is an accepted and important tradition to be maintained.

Through this tradition universities play a fundamental role in maintaining freedom of expression and thought in a democratic society¹⁹².

In mandating universities to play the role of social critic and conscience, the New Zealand Government has positioned this function within the bounds of that country's higher education accountability regime. Thus New Zealand universities are highly unusual in that they are audited to ensure that the political dimension of academic freedom is being protected and enabled.

Universities in the Australian State of Victoria have had a similar requirement legislated for in their enabling legislation. In 2001, the then Minister for Education and Training in Victoria, the Hon. Lynne Kosky established a review of university governance to examine the accountability of Victoria's universities. The review panel reported to the Minister in 2002. The first recommendation of the review panel was to insert a new object into each

¹⁹¹ Available < http://www.legislation.govt.nz/browse_vw.asp?content-set=pal_statutes.

¹⁹² New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee cited in R. Kerr, *Academic Freedom and University Accountability*, paper presented at the University of Auckland Winter Lecture Series: The University in the 21st Century, 1998, p. 5-6, <http://www.nzbr.org.nz/documents/speeches/speeches-98/academic_freedom_and_university_accountability.doc.htm, viewed 10 November 2005.

Victorian University Act to specify that the universities are required 'to promote critical enquiry within the university and in the general community'¹⁹³. The Review Panel stated:

One of the core responsibilities of universities is to serve the public interest by promoting critical inquiry, and this should be on the shared goals for universities. The review intends to convey three concepts by this object. First, that universities' will promote critical inquiry internally. ... Secondly, that universities' will promote critical inquiry in the general community. The third concept the review seeks to express by this object is that the ultimate purpose of promoting critical inquiry is to serve the public interest¹⁹⁴.

Indeed, Governments and academics have consistently argued that socio-political criticism is an important function of universities. The Murray Committee report argued that '...a good university is the best guarantee that mankind can have, that somebody, whatever the circumstances, will continue to seek the truth and to make it known. Any free country welcomes this and expects this service of its universities'¹⁹⁵. In his policy statement on Higher Education, Dawkins argued:

We want to be a society that understands its own political processes, enables all citizens to participate in those processes and does not accept without question decisions made on its behalf. Higher education is the source of much of this understanding. We do not want a higher education system that fails to analyse and, where necessary, criticize the society in which it operates, or one that chooses not to spread knowledge among those with fewer opportunities to increase their own understanding of events¹⁹⁶.

¹⁹³ Victorian Government, *Universities (Amendment) Act*, 2003, p. 32, http://www.dms.dpc.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/Pubhome.nsf?OpenDatabase, viewed 14 November 2005.

¹⁹⁴ Department of Education and Training, *Review of University Governance*, 2002, p. 22, <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/highered/postsece/ReviewOfUniversityGovernance.pdf>, viewed 15 November 2005.

¹⁹⁵ Murray Committee, *Committee on Australian Universities Report*, AGPS, Canberra, p. 11

¹⁹⁶ J. S Dawkins, *Higher Education: a policy statement*, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p. 7.

In his overview document, *Higher Education at the Crossroads*, Minister Nelson argued in 2005 but in a somewhat more equivocal way, that one of the purposes of higher education is to ‘contribute to a democratic, civilized society and promote the tolerance and debate that underpins it’¹⁹⁷.

The literature produced by Australian academics also treats social criticism as an important function of universities. For example, Galligan and Roberts argue that universities are more than places of teaching, learning and education for the professions, rather:

Universities have a profoundly important role in enhancing the civic foundations of democracy by providing a site where ideas can be shared, discussed and debated in public forums. In a broader political culture that is at times hostile and often wedded to the ruling interests of the day, this role has continuing importance¹⁹⁸.

Ian Lowe had supported this proposition in his contribution to the 1996 monograph entitled *Shaping the New University*. Then Lowe had said that ‘... university academics have a duty to act as the conscience and critic of society’¹⁹⁹. Lowe further suggested that ‘Unless we believe that we have already reached the zenith of social and economic organization, it continues to be important for universities to fulfil that critical role’²⁰⁰.

¹⁹⁷ Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), *Our Universities: Backing Australia’s Future*, 2003, p. 2, <http://www.backingaustraliasfuture.gov.au/policy.htm>, p.2, viewed, 10 September 2005,

¹⁹⁸ B. Galligan & W. Roberts, *Australian Universities as Sites of Citizenship and Civic Responsibility* (Victoria): Melbourne University Serving Wider Communities, nd, <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/highered/postsece/MelbourneUni.pdf>, viewed 22 August 2005.

¹⁹⁹ I. Lowe, ‘The Changing Role of Universities’, in I. Veit-Brause (Ed.), *Shaping the New University*, Sciences in Society Centre, Deakin University, 1996, p. 40.

²⁰⁰ Lowe, 1996, p. 40.

Glyn Davis, the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, contends that the role of social critic and conscience is a 'recent arrival' in regard to the function of universities. Davis dates the idea of social and political critique to the post-war period and more specifically, to the 1960's Free Speech Movement associated with the University of California at Berkeley²⁰¹. Davis makes the point that the role of universities in fostering socio-political critique has replaced the concept of character formation and the political elitism that was often associated with this aspiration:

In a mass system, universities no longer aspire to stamp their students in a particular image (although they do claim to instill certain attributes). Instead of shaping the morals of future leaders, the value of critically questioning received wisdom has become a central motif of the undergraduate experience. Beyond their dealings with students, universities also seek to transfer knowledge to 'lay' communities to support active citizenship in an emerging 'knowledge society'²⁰².

Davis argues that:

The post modern university plays a mix of roles – education and knowledge transfer, development of new ideas, a place for scholarly work, intellectual training, social critique and community engagement, yet also a social portal for credentials, certification and access to careers²⁰³.

The question of democratic politics and academic engagement is as relevant to what happens inside the university as it is to the public spaces beyond it. Indeed, Maurice Kogan suggests that '...higher education has social obligations which start with the proper performance of the academic tasks of teaching, promoting learning and the creation and testing of knowledge'²⁰⁴. In this regard, academics are obliged to keep governments and university leaders accountable for the rhetoric they speak in regard to freedom, excellence and responsiveness, to name a few. This requires the practice of

²⁰¹ G. Davis, *What is a University for?*, p. 2, <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/vc/consultation/whatfor.html>, viewed 10 October 2005.

²⁰² G. Davis, p. 2

²⁰³ G. Davis, p. 2

²⁰⁴ M. Kogan, 'Higher Education Communities and Academic Identity' in *Higher Education Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 3, July 2000, p 208.

political freedom within the university itself. The practice of political freedom within the university is recognized within UNESCO's²⁰⁵ position paper on academic freedom rights. In 1997, UNESCO passed a resolution, which made recommendations concerning the status of higher-education teaching personnel²⁰⁶. The UNESCO recommendations recognize the political practice of freedom both within and beyond the university walls. The resolutions passed by UNESCO (to which Australia is a signatory) include the following clauses on the rights and freedoms of academics. Clause 27 states²⁰⁷:

Higher-education teaching personnel are entitled to the maintaining of academic freedom, that is to say, the right without constriction by prescribed doctrine, to freedom of teaching and discussion, freedom in carrying out research and in disseminating and publishing the results thereof, freedom to express freely their opinion about the institution or system in which they work, freedom from institutional censorship and freedom to participate in professional or representative academic bodies.

Clause 31 states²⁰⁸:

Higher-education teaching personnel should have the right and opportunity, without discrimination of any kind, according to their abilities, to take part in the governing bodies and to criticise the functioning of higher education institutions, including their own, while respecting the right of other sections of the academic community to participate...²⁰⁹.

The right of academics to criticize the ideas and practices of their own institution or those of the higher education system more generally is one of the most contentious

²⁰⁵ UNESCO is the abbreviation for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

²⁰⁶ UNESCO, *Recommendations concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel*, 1997, http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13144&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html, viewed 28 October 2005.

²⁰⁷ UNESCO, p. 30.

²⁰⁸ UNESCO, p. 30.

²⁰⁹ Other clauses within the UNESCO resolution cover issues such as the right to enjoy the civil, political, social and cultural rights applicable to all citizens (clause 26) and the right to an academic workload that is conducive to the exercise of freedom (clause 62).

practices associated with academic freedom. Jones, Galvin and Woodhouse note that this freedom gives ‘...academic staff an apparent right denied most employees in other organisations’²¹⁰. Academic engagement in university politics has historically come under idea of collegiality, defined in a recent study as ‘... the collegial control of intellectual processes and products in accordance with democratically determined ethical principles and professional standards’²¹¹. In this regard, the practice of political freedom is more than a question of power and how it is formalised in institutional decision making, it is also an issue of what knowledge is produced and how. In this regard, Wilkinson argues that the university ‘... is the only institution in which intellectual freedom and the introduction of creative modes of framing reality can be cultivated. Further, it is the context in which questioning of the existing power structure and its philosophy, as well as its own value and normative foundation, can occur’²¹².

In Australia and elsewhere, the socio-political roles of universities have often been associated with the social sciences and in particular disciplines such as economics, sociology and politics. However, the linkage between public scholarship and the prospects for social change suggest that these functions are highly congruent with social work, the academic discipline examined within this study. This is perhaps more the case in Australia where social work education is constituted as placing great value on social justice and incorporates the critical tradition in its activities, often locating the cause of individual issues within the broader social arrangements²¹³.

²¹⁰ D. Jones, K. Galvin, & D. Woodhouse, *Universities as Critic and Conscience of Society: The Role of Academic Freedom*, New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit, 2000, p. 4.

²¹¹ C. Kayrooz, P Kinnear & P. Preston, Academic freedom and commercialisation of Australian universities: Perceptions and experiences of social scientists. Discussion Paper No. 37., p. 19.

²¹² D. Wilkinson, ‘Transforming the Social Order: The Role of the University in Social Change’, in *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1994, p. 330.

²¹³ Idit Weiss, ‘Is there a global common core to social work? A cross-national comparative study of BSW graduate students’, in *Social Work*, Vol. 50, Iss. 2, 2005.

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) is the professional representative body for social workers in Australia. On its web site the AASW articulates its understanding of the goals and purposes of the social work profession:

Social work is the profession committed to the pursuit of social justice, to the enhancement of the quality of life and the development of the full potential of each individual, group and community in society. Social workers pursue these goals by working to address the barriers, inequalities, and injustices that exist in society, and by active involvement in situations of personal distress and crisis. This is done by working with individuals towards the realisation of their intellectual, physical and emotional potentials, and by working with individuals, groups and communities in the pursuit and achievement of equitable access to social, economic and political resources²¹⁴.

The AASW contends that social workers pursue their professional goals:

- 'Through involvement in research, policy development and analysis, consultancy, and management.
- Work with individuals, groups and communities to shape and change the conditions in which they live.
- Advocate for disadvantaged members of society.
- Work towards the elimination of structural inequalities in society to facilitate a more equitable distribution of resources.
- Engage in research to build our knowledge base and understanding of society.
- Analyse, challenge and develop social policies²¹⁵.

Jim Ife, one of Australia's most prominent Australian social work academics argues that:

²¹⁴ Australian Association of Social Workers, *About Social Work*, n.d., <http://www.aasw.asn.au/becomeamember/aboutsw/index.htm>, viewed 28 September 2005.

²¹⁵ Australian Association of Social Workers, *About AASW*, <http://www.aasw.asn.au/about/index.htm>, viewed 28 September 2005.

Few professions or occupations pay as much attention to their value base as social work, and social work has consistently defined itself not in value-neutral terms, but as operating from a clear and explicit value position. While this value base may be defined using different words ... it is important to emphasise that social work has consistently been defined as a *normative* activity. It does not simply do what political leaders and managers tell it to do, but rather works towards a better society, defined in its own terms. ...

‘Their’s not to make reply, their’s not to reason why’ is hardly a creed for social workers, whose value base frequently requires them both to attempt to reason why and also to make vocal and assertive reply wherever possible’²¹⁶

Ife treats dissent, creativity and the seeking of alternatives as a ‘natural consequence of social work’s primary commitment to a value position’²¹⁷. Mark Furlong lends support to Ife’s arguments when he says:

Social Work has always been and always will be a difficult case I believe we should be ‘difficult’ as we necessarily tend to contest and contend. In fact, what we represent actually invokes contestation and contention as social workers act from a value based position which is quite different to merely side-stepping consumer complaints and staying away from ethics committees. We do not, unlike our professional colleagues, even aspire to being value neutral. Because of this we will always be at least a little like a witch at a christening in relation to those clinicians who work efficiently upon their cases, can-do project workers to economic rationalist managers all of whom work to the dual icons of efficiency and career²¹⁸.

Likewise, Ian O’Connor argues that ‘Social work is a profession, an applied discipline. It seeks to engage with the world and change it’²¹⁹. Karen Healy constructs this as a particularly important function of academic social workers. Healy links the need for socio-political activism with the privilege of academic freedom:

²¹⁶ Jim Ife, *Rethinking Social Work*, Longman, Melbourne, 1997 p. 11

²¹⁷ Ife, 1997, p. 11

²¹⁸ M. Furlong, ‘Being neither Pollyanna nor Henny Penny: Responding to McDonald and Jones’, in *Australian Social Work*, Vol. 53, No. 3, September, 2000, p. 15.

²¹⁹ I. O’Connor, ‘Mission, evidence and outcomes: Building a future for social work’, in *Australian Social Work*, Vol. 53, No. 3, September, 2000, p. 18.

... critical social workers located in the academy can provide important support for social workers in the field, particularly in voicing concerns about the impact of government policy and community service provision on marginalised populations. Although academics' opportunity for freedom of expression is becoming more constrained, it remains greater than that of most of their colleagues in the field. As the human services undergo marketisation, workers are likely to find that contractual obligations and increasingly authoritarian work contexts limit their opportunities to engage in public debate and critique. In this environment the greater freedom of the academic becomes an important resource and can [be] used in collaboration with the field to express shared concerns²²⁰.

This representation of social work and its stated goals suggests that social work academics are mandated and supported by their professional body to exercise academic freedom for the purpose of enacting public scholarship. The normative professional emphasis on social change and socio-political activism also indicates that it is reasonable to assume that social work academics incorporate these into their conception of the university, their academic role and their practice of freedom. These assumptions are tested as part of this thesis.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have sought to recover and renew a vision of the university which is not constituted through an excessive privatism. My 'imaginary' of the university as public space supports an expansive conception of academic freedom. In this regard, my assertions about freedom are clearly linked to the role and purpose of universities. However, they are also linked to the issue of power. It makes little sense to talk about the prospects for freedom without exploring, both theoretically and in practice, the conditions of freedom. The endless potential of freedom always manifests itself as a more limited actuality because, invariably, it is practiced within a context that is shot through with power relations. The next chapter engages the relationship between power and

²²⁰ K. Healy, 'Reinventing Critical Social Work: Challenges from Practice, Context and Postmodernism', in *Critical Social Work*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2000, available <http://www.criticalsocialwork.com/units/socialwork/critical.nsf/inToc/E603FCB05B70F07385256EA5006E72E0>, viewed 10 January 2006.

freedom in greater depth. To be specific, I use the next chapter to argue that power and freedom are not mutually exclusive. In this regard, I challenge the dominant paradigm that constructs power and freedom as absolutes. My intent is show that power acts in a multitude of ways, not just as a repressive force which 'says no' to freedom.

I believe there are more instances of the abridgment of the freedom of the people by gradual and silent encroachments of those in power than by violent and sudden usurpations. -James Madison, speech, Virginia Convention, 1788

Most men, after a little freedom, have preferred authority with the consoling assurances and the economy of effort which it brings. -Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Morals*, 1929

Chapter Three: Rethinking Power Relations in Academe

The conventional approaches to ‘academic freedom’ and the conceptions of power that underpins them are limited in terms that have been elucidated forcefully by Michel Foucault. Not the least of these limitations is that it does not capture all the ways in which the activities of academics are shaped by regimes of power. In this chapter I want to characterize the conventional account of power and then provide an alternative paradigm of power relations and detail its significance for a study of academic freedom in contemporary universities. This Foucaultian alternative represents a broader and more variegated conception of power and amends our way of thinking about the effects of power on freedom. The alternative framework is informed by the work of Michel Foucault. Let me begin by outlining something of the discourse of power that has dominated contemporary discussions of academic freedom.

Sovereign Power -The Heroic Conception

The conventional framing of academic freedom depends on certain basic assumption exemplified in the proposition that every now and again a free thinking academic is brought to heel by the exercise of authoritarian power. As American academic William Tierney put it ‘... most discussions about academic freedom [in Australia] tend to turn on

the more celebrated cases that come to light...'²²¹. The most recent of these 'celebrated cases' was the dismissal of Ted Steele from the University of Wollongong in 2002. Steele was dismissed without notice for raising concerns about marking practices at the university. In conjunction with the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) Steele successfully pursued his case for reinstatement through the legal system. After the Federal Court dismissed an appeal by the university, Steele was re-appointed and provided with back-payment of his wages. The Steele case attracted a lot of attention in Australia and internationally because the university wanted to test its power to sack an employee without notice²²².

This recent case sits on top of a small but distinguished history of such cases like the attempts by Victoria University to silence Alan Patience who was the only elected member on council at the Victorian University of Technology. In this role he discovered that his university was spending \$100,000 annually to rent a corporate box at the new stadium at Docklands. In an email to members of the university, Patience criticized this decision referring to senior management as 'boyos'. In response the university suspended Patiences' access to email facilities and notified him in writing that formal deformation proceedings would be instigated in relation to the contents of the original email²²³. This matter was eventually resolved without legal proceedings.

²²¹ William Tierney, 'Academic freedom and organisational identity', in *Australian Universities Review*, Vol. 44, No. 1 & 2, 2001, p 12.

²²² A. Contractor, 'Axed academic treated 'worse than murderer'', *Sydney Morning Herald*, February 28, 2002, p. 27

²²³ It is interesting and important to note the details of this case are provided by Patience himself in his journal article entitled 'Silencing the Academy? Reflecting on a dispute in a corporatising university' in *Australian Universities Review*, 2/1999-1/2000, p. 69. This suggests that the universities ability to control communications was limited to its own domain.

Undoubtedly the most celebrated case of 'heroic academic freedom' in Australian history was that of Sydney Sparkes Orr²²⁴. It is almost impossible to engage the question of academic freedom in Australian universities without finding reference to the Orr case. Indeed a number of books have been produced on this topic, some supporting Orr, others castigating him²²⁵. Orr was appointed Professor of Philosophy in the University of Tasmania in 1952. From the start Orr was critical of the conditions in the University and in 1954 he published an open letter to the Premier and the Minister for Education. The open letter resulted in a Royal Commission into the state of the university and Orr was active in the struggle to have the commissions' recommendations fully implemented.

On the 16 December 1955 the Vice Chancellor of the University of Tasmania introduced into council a number of allegations regarding Orr's conduct in regard to his students. One of these pertained to alleged sexual misconduct between Professor Orr and one of his students. After an enquiry by the Vice Chancellor and two Professors, Orr was dismissed. Orr brought a case of wrongful dismissal before the Supreme Court of Tasmania and was found innocent of all but 6 of the 22 allegations of misconduct. These allegations pertained to the affair with his student, Suzanne Kemp. Critics, like Cassandra Pybus, contend that Orr got what he deserved for taking advantage of his student. In contrast, Orr's supporters consider the Kemp affair to be a minor issue, suggesting that the significant point is the politics of retribution that followed Orr's open letter and his criticisms of the university. The Orr case, like the others, is a story of a 'heroic individual academic locked in struggle with an individual administrator'²²⁶.

By making these cases exemplars of the abuse of academic freedom, commentators have, knowingly or otherwise, constructed and reproduced a sovereign view of power that is

²²⁴ W.H.C. Eddy, 'Orr', Jacaranda, Brisbane, 1961. This book is the source for the discussion of the Orr case in this section.

²²⁵ See for example, C. Pybus, 'Gross Moral Turpitude', William Heinemann, Melbourne, 1993.

²²⁶ Tierney, 2001. Tierney identifies this as the grand narrative that structures most Australian accounts of academic freedom and its loss.

based on grand actions and a duality between the powerful and the powerless. This conceptualisation of power is implicit in Isaiah Berlin's²²⁷ famous formulation of negative liberty, which posits freedom as a property that *can be constrained*. To be free, from Berlin's perspective is to be *free from interference*. As Hayward argues this construction ultimately hinges on a clear-cut distinction between free action and action shaped by the 'power' of others²²⁸. Simon Marginson notes also that:

In the classical liberal understanding, which was originally shaped by the struggle against feudal authority, power is understood as a repressive force. The possessors of power (usually seen as the state) suppress the autonomy and individuality of those without power²²⁹.

This construction of the relationship between power and freedom still dominates the present-day literature and research on academic freedom. Karen McLafferty argues that:

Regardless of the discipline within which it is couched, it [academic freedom] can be understood in its most basic terms as a sort of "insulation" of these different spheres of academic life...²³⁰.

This perspective reflects its liberal heritage in that it is primarily concerned with the prospects for 'abuses' of power and the maintenance of spheres of action outside of the reach of those who are deemed to hold power or to be powerful. Nancy Fraser makes this point clear in saying 'The liberal framework understands power as emanating from the sovereign and imposing itself upon the subjects. It tries to define a power-free zone of rights whose penetration is illegitimate. Illegitimate power is understood as oppression

²²⁷ I. Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1969.

²²⁸ Clarissa Rile Hayward, *De-facing Power*, Cambridge University Press, London, 2000, p. 15.

²²⁹ Simon Marginson, 'Steering from a distance: Power relations in Australian higher education', *Higher Education*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 1997, pp. 63-80

²³⁰ Karen Ann McLafferty, *The Politics of Freedom in Higher Education: A Comparative Case Study of Faculty Autonomy in the Educational Research Process*, Ph.D Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1999, p. 3, emphasis added.

or the transgression of a limit'²³¹. This standpoint constitutes an absolute model of power and freedom, one which often places exclusive emphasis on external constraints – power comes from outside the academy. From this perspective, the central axis running through higher education ‘... is a zero-sum conflict between academic freedom and institutional autonomy on one hand, and governmental intervention on the other’²³².

This conception of power and freedom needs to be challenged. Freedom in any meaningful sense needs to be understood as something we do, not as an abstract space given to us by others – freedom is not something ‘out there’ waiting to be appropriated. Understanding academic freedom as something we do rather than something we are given forces us to accept a share of ownership of those sites where we speak and act and to confront our own complicity in maintaining a given set of institutional arrangements. Hannah Pitkin argues that

Our cultural arrangement do not just grow naturally, like a tree, they are founded, practiced and enacted by people. But ... we resist acknowledging the degree to which the patterns by which we live are our own doing – if not originally created by us nevertheless sustained right now by nothing more than ourselves²³³.

Peter Taylor outlines the significance of academics exercising their political freedom in arguing that:

Whatever future there will be for academics, as active, committed, valuing individuals, they will have to talk and write and advocate it into being. This is a constant, ongoing task – forever incomplete. Change requires new words, new ideas, new questions – new thinking. The issue of possibilities and becoming are

²³¹ N. Fraser, ‘Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions’, *Praxis International*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1981, pp. 272-287.

²³² S. Marginson, ‘How Free is Academic Freedom’, *Higher Education Research and Development*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1997, p. 363.

²³³ H. Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt’s Concept of the Social*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998, p. 2.

central to the web of rules that govern academics' work. ...these rules are the achievement of academics rather than an imposition on them²³⁴.

In terms of the issue of power, the liberal tradition is too narrowly focused. Institutionally, power's mechanisms do more than repress or oppress. They construct the '... systems of laws and other boundaries to action that determine and distribute rights, duties, rewards and sanctions'²³⁵. For example, the Federal Government has specified national priority areas in regard to the funding of research. As a mechanism of power this not only constitutes particular ends as valuable, it also distributes rewards in the form of funding. Given that the specification of national priority areas does not constitute an act of prohibition or repression it can not 'count' as an exercise in power within the conventional liberal analysis of academic freedom. But it should. The nomination of national priority areas has power-effects in relation to academic activity. It shapes the actions of academics by narrowing the field of what is considered to be important research. In order to fully grasp the exercise of power within contemporary universities we need to broaden the way in which we understand it. An expanded understanding of what 'counts' as an exercise in power is important in a study that seeks to make visible the multitude of ways in which academic activity is governed and does so in ways that recognizes that academics are engaged in their own modes of self-government.

Beyond Sovereign Power

The sovereign or liberal model of power restricts, to a significant degree, the questions we can ask about power relations in Australian universities. To be more specific, the sovereign model of power encourages researchers to limit their engagement to three essential questions:

²³⁴ P. G. Taylor, *Making Sense of Academic Life; academics, universities and change*, The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 1999, p. 115. Emphasis added.

²³⁵ Clarissa Rile Hayward *De-Facing Power*, Ph.D Thesis, Yale University, 1998, p. 261.

- Who has power?
- How do powerful people interfere in the free action of academics? and
- Are these acts of interference legitimate?

These three questions provide a very narrow lens through which we can view the exercise of power and its effects on freedom. Too much emphasis is placed on personalities and positions. We have to be able to identify an 'owner' of power before we can explore how it is deployed and whether or not it is reasonable that power is exercised in a particular way.

Foucault views the liberal or sovereign model of power as manifesting 'economism' in that power is constituted as '...something that can be possessed and acquired, that can be surrendered through a contract or by force, that can be alienated or recuperated, that circulates and fertilizes one region but avoids others'²³⁶. Foucault contends that this understanding of power was applicable in certain historical periods, like feudal times, but is now outdated as a historic experience and thus as an explanatory framework for analyzing contemporary power relations such as those at work within contemporary Australian universities.

Foucault's claims that the seventeenth and eighteenth century saw the development of a new form of power relations that was incompatible with relations of sovereignty. Foucault contends 'This non-sovereign power, which is foreign to the form of sovereignty is "disciplinary" power'²³⁷:

This discourse of discipline ... is alien to the discourse that makes rule a product of the will of the sovereign. The discourse of discipline is about a rule: not a judicial rule derived from sovereignty, but a discourse about a natural rule, or in other words a norm²³⁸.

²³⁶ M. Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*, David Macey (trans.), Penguin, London, 2004, p. 14.

²³⁷ Foucault, 2004, p. 36

²³⁸ Foucault, 2004, p. 38

For Foucault, discipline provides the key paradigm for understanding power in the modern era. Discipline works through a diverse range of micro-practices that train, order, rank and classify people across a multitude of institutions and dimensions of everyday life. In contrast to sovereign power, this new modality of power is not repressive in that it is not centrally concerned with constraining, restricting or thwarting. Rather disciplinary power is positive and productive, ‘...it produces particular kinds of subjects—individuals—through the meticulous observation, control, and arrangement of bodies’²³⁹. In this non-sovereign mode of power relations, force is replaced by practices like training, judgment and surveillance. Within the Foucaultian worldview, power is understood in terms of ‘normalization’ and technique rather than ‘might’, ‘right’ and ‘law’. Power relations work to convince people remain or become socially/institutionally acceptable agents and or categories of person – parent, patient, employee, academic²⁴⁰.

Indeed, disciplinary power is inseparable from the practice of ‘normalization’ i.e. the specification in ethical terms of the norms we ought to live by. This form of power is exercised through the enactment of ordering processes that seek to constitute what individuals should be – what counts as normal, desirable or appropriate in a given setting. Disciplinary power produces correct behaviour through the deployment of a host of micro-techniques far removed from any ‘grand actions’ which are counted as an exercise in power in the liberal discourse.

Foucault suggests then that contemporary power relations go beyond corrective action in that they incite, create and produce subjects rather than merely disciplining them. Power, from Foucault’s perspective:

²³⁹ H. Sharp, ‘Smash the sovereign paradigm! “the war of the races” as an alternative to the discourse of sovereignty’, *Spring*, Vol. 6, Iss. 1, p. 106.

²⁴⁰ C. Fred Alford, *Rethinking Freedom – Why Freedom Has Lost It’s Meaning and What Can be Done to Save It*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2005.

...operates on the field of possibilities in which the behaviour of active subjects is able to inscribe itself. It is a set of actions on possible actions; it incites, it induces, it makes easier or more difficult; it releases or contrives, makes more probable or less; in the extreme, it constrains or forbids absolutely, but it is always a way of acting upon one or more acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action²⁴¹.

For Foucault, power in the modern era is rarely exercised close-up, e.g. as a command. Indeed, Foucault argues that power forms a dense web that passes through institutions and apparatuses. Power is persuasive 'not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere'²⁴². This decentralized view of power is expressed in Foucault's famous idea government is the 'conduct of conduct':

Basically power is less a confrontation between two adversaries or the linking of one to the other than a question of government. This word must be allowed the very broad meaning which it had in the sixteenth century. "Government" did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick. It did not only cover the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic subjection, but also modes of action, more or less considered and calculated, which were destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. *To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others*²⁴³.

On this account 'government' is concerned with people's conduct and the management or administration of populations and individuals. Thus 'to govern' is to act upon the action of individuals and collectives in order to achieve certain ends or objectives. Foucault's concept of government incorporates:

...all endeavors to shape, guide, direct the conduct of others, whether these be the crew of a ship, the members of a household, the employees of a boss, the children of

²⁴¹ M. Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', in *Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984*, James D. Faubion (Ed.), Paul Rabinow, (Series Ed.), Robert Hurley and others (Trans.) Volume 3., 1997, pp. 326-348.

²⁴² M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Volume 1, R. Hurley (Trans.), Harmondsworth, 1978, p. 93.

²⁴³ Foucault, 1997

a family or the inhabitants of a territory. And it also embraces the ways in which one might be urged and educated to bridle one's own passions, to control one's own instincts, to govern oneself.²⁴⁴

In suggesting that government and the attainment of particular ends involves both governing others and self-government and more importantly a connection or alignment between the two, Foucault makes clear the relationship between the exercise of power in the form of government and power as domination or oppression. In Foucault's own words:

... governing people is not a way to force people to do what the governor wants; it is always a versatile equilibrium, with complementarity and conflicts between techniques which assure coercion and processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself.²⁴⁵

This represents a major shift in our understanding of power and freedom. In the Liberal or sovereign model, freedom and power are mutually exclusive. In Foucault's account, freedom and power are mutually dependant. This is why Rose will say '... when it comes to governing human beings, to govern is to presuppose the freedom of the governed. To govern humans is not to crush their capacity to act, but to acknowledge it and to utilize it for one's own objectives'²⁴⁶. David Halperin likewise insists that modern forms of power:

... actually require citizens to be free, so that citizens can assume from the state the burden of some of its former regulatory functions and impose on themselves – of their own accord – rules of conduct and mechanisms of control. ... Liberal power does not simply prohibit; it does not directly terrorize. It normalizes, "responsibilizes", and disciplines. The state no longer needs to frighten or coerce its subjects into proper behaviour: it can safely leave them to make their own choices in the allegedly sacrosanct private sphere of personal freedom which they

²⁴⁴ N. Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing political thought*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 3.

²⁴⁵ M. Foucault, 'About the beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self' (Transcription of two lectures in Dartmouth on November 17 & 24, 1980), Mark Biasius (Ed.) in *Political Theory*, Vol. 21, No. 2, May, 1994, pp. 198-227.

²⁴⁶ Rose, 1999, p. 4

now inhibit, because within that sphere they freely and spontaneously police both their own conduct and the conduct of others...

Foucault is interested in both the technologies of power and the 'technologies of the self'. Foucault points to the ways individuals act upon themselves, and to the prospect of practices like self-censorship:

Technologies of the self ... permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and by way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality²⁴⁷.

Despite the enduring construction of academics as self-reflexive, critical, autonomous human beings there is nothing to substantiate an assumption that those who work in academia are somehow immune to the practice of self-imposed governance. In this regard, Foucault's insights on this issue are important to this thesis.

A third key of Foucault's treatment of power is his theory of discourse. Foucault treats discourses 'as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak'²⁴⁸. As Ball contends, 'Discourses are about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak when and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations'²⁴⁹. Foucault's concern is with the way in which dominant discourses shape and create meaning systems or knowledges that are accorded status whilst others are marginalised. Foucault's concept of discourse can be illuminated further with reference to his notion of 'regimes of truth':

²⁴⁷ M. Foucault, 'Technologies of the Self', in L. Martin, H. Gutman & Patrick H. Hutton (Eds.) in *Technologies of the Self: a seminar with Michel Foucault*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1988, p. 18.

²⁴⁸ M. Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, A. Sheridan (Trans.), Pantheon, New York, 1972, p. 49

²⁴⁹ Ball, 1990, p. 2

Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true²⁵⁰.

Regimes of truth, whether they are about mental illness, sexuality or law and order (the cases investigated by Foucault) or the purpose and practice of higher education as in the case of this study, simultaneously limit and make sense of our actions. In this regard Foucault argues that 'we are judged, condemned, classified in our undertakings, destined to a certain mode of living or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of specific effects of power'²⁵¹. In relation to scholarly engagements, Kennedy contends that '... each discourse sets out the parameters of a field of study or a type of intellectual activity, and establishes a set of rules both for individuals participating in the field of activity and for the theoretical models that they create'²⁵².

In effect, Foucault rejects any presumption that there is an Archimedean point where we can stand to gain access to an objective truth about the world. Foucault disputes the liberal idea that knowledge sits outside the fray of power relations in order to pronounce its truth. From Foucault's perspective power *and* knowledge are inextricably linked. Thus '... power and knowledge directly imply one another; ... there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations'²⁵³. In this regard the exercise of power involves the accumulation of knowledge in various forms. In the first form, Foucault links the notion of discipline as 'correct training' with the idea of a discipline as a body of knowledge.

²⁵⁰ Foucault, 1980, p. 133.

²⁵¹ Foucault, 1980, p. 94.

²⁵² V. Kennedy, *Edward Said: a critical introduction*, Polity Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 21.

²⁵³ M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 1979, p. 27.

From a Foucaultian standpoint, knowledge – particularly that associated with the human sciences – enables and legitimizes the exercise of power embedded in attempts to normalize people. Disciplines like psychology, sociology, anthropology and more recently economics and management, specify desirable ways of being, thinking and doing as well as articulating optimal performance expectations. These aspects of academic life are often less visible as exercises in power because the norm that underpins them often become depoliticized and thus not viewed or understood as contestable. Indeed, we can understand much of the current ‘crises of the university’ as a result of older seldom challenged norms being contested in the Enterprise University whilst attempts are being made to put in place and depoliticize new norms that seek to specify what academics can be, want, think and do.

In its second form, the power/knowledge nexus enables the collection of data at an individual level. For example, the collection of performance data enables an individual to be monitored and possibly disciplined in relation to key performance indicators. In this regard, the intensification of power relations is always accompanied and enabled by the intensification of knowledge requirements. While the construction of knowledge enables the exercise in power, the opposite also occurs in that exercises in power enable the construction of knowledge. In academia, these exercises in power form the bounds of acceptability and desirability in regard to knowledge production and dissemination. In effect, techniques of knowledge and strategies of power are co-dependent, each constituting the other. Both the ‘program’ of higher education and higher education personnel are rendered knowable and governable within this mutual dependency. From Foucault’s perspective we are in greater danger of being subjugated when we construct truth as power-free than when we view it as constituted in and productive of power relations.

Foucault’s work challenges Liberalism’s conception of self and power. He repudiated the sovereign view of power as repression as well as the sovereign view of the self, the idea that human beings embody a transcendent, essential nature prior to any engagement with

the world. From Foucault's perspective 'subjectivity' or the sense we make of the world and ourselves is discursively formed and profoundly historically contingent. In this regard Foucault is concerned with 'how social beings come to be made into certain types of subject – a consumer, a conservative, a parent, an academic – through various modes of seeing, knowing and talking about the world that are made available to them by society'²⁵⁴. Foucault spells out the terms of his rejection of the sovereign view of the self in an interview about his work on prisons. Foucault stated:

It's my hypothesis that the individual is not a pre-given entity which is seized on by the exercise of power. The individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces²⁵⁵

Subjectivity, Foucault suggests is intertwined with relations of power and knowledge. In this regard, '... our utterances are governed by underlying rules of discourse formations, our actions are proscribed and authorized by relations of power, and our very conception of our self is circumscribed by technologies of subjectivity'²⁵⁶. Foucault exemplifies the intertwining of these relations and the historical contingency of the subject, in his discussion of *Herculine Barbin*, a nineteenth century French Hermaphrodite. Barbin, Foucault contends was not born as a living contradiction or a subject with a problematic body, sexuality or gender. Rather, Barbin's existence and way of being in the world were pathologised by the medical practitioners new forms of knowledge and the institutional exercises of power that accompanied these knowledges.

²⁵⁴ B. Carter, 'Rejecting Truthful Identities: Foucault 'Race' and Politics', in M. Lloyd and A. Thacker (Eds.), *The Impact of Michael Foucault on the Social Sciences and Humanities*, MacMillan, London, 1996, p. 129

²⁵⁵ M. Foucault, 'Questions on Geography', in *Power/Knowledge*, 1980, pp. 73-74.

²⁵⁶ K. Phillips, 'Spaces of Invention: Dissension, Freedom and Thought in Foucault', in *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, Vol. 35, No. 4, 2002, p. 328

As Hamman points out it was during Barbin's life '... that a whole series of discourses and practices emerged that effectively transformed Barbin from a polymorphous and as yet undefined being into a moral, scientific and legalistic monster who only consequently became incapable of existing as required – as an indivisible individual'²⁵⁷. As Foucault argued in his introduction:

Indeed it was a very long time before the postulate that a hermaphrodite must have a sex – a single, a true sex – was formulated. For centuries, it was quite simply agreed that hermaphrodites had two. Biological theories of sexuality, judicial conceptions of the individual, forms of administrative control in modern nations, led little by little to rejecting the idea of a mixture of two sexes in a single body, and consequently to limiting the free choice of indeterminate individuals. Henceforth, everybody was to have one and only one sex²⁵⁸.

Rather than constituting the subject as a fixed point around which all other theoretical explanations rotate, Foucault constructs subjectivity as something 'which must be itself illuminated'²⁵⁹.

Numerous commentators have noted that the contemporary focus on organizational culture has '... increasingly been concerned with the creation of a new subjectivity and person-hood'. In this regard, identity formation and reformation has become subject to an increase in organizational control. In effect, the production of 'appropriate' individuals has become more significant in the discourse of management. Willmott and Alveson contend that identity regulation as a form of organizational control is a contingent accomplishment of relations between regulative discourses, the interpretive activity involved in reproducing and transforming self identity and the self identity of the worker

²⁵⁷ Trent Henry Hamann, *Foucault and the Art of Impolitics*, Ph.D Thesis, State University of New York, 2003, p. 35.

²⁵⁸ M. Foucault, 'Introduction' in H. Barbin & M. Foucault, *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth Century French Hermaphrodite*, Richard McDougall (Trans), Random House, New York, 1980.

²⁵⁹ Amy Allen, 'Power, Subjectivity, and Agency: Between Arendt and Foucault', in *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, Vol.10, No. 2 2002 pp. 131-149.

which is comprised of narratives of the self. In effect ‘... self identity, as a repertoire of structured narrations, is sustained through identity work in which regulation is accomplished by selectively, but not necessarily reflectively, adopting practices and discourses that are more or less intentionally targeted at the ‘insides’ of employees including managers’²⁶⁰.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Alvesson and Willmott’s work is their account of the ways in which identity regulation is attempted - and accomplished to various degrees – within contemporary workplaces. Alvesson and Willmott identify nine key processes of identity regulation. These are:

1. Defining the person directly.
2. Defining a person by defining others.
3. Providing a specific vocabulary of motives
4. Explicating morals and values
5. Knowledge and skills
6. Group categorization and affiliation
7. Hierarchical location
8. Establishing and clarifying a distinct set of rules of the game.
9. Defining the context²⁶¹.

The regulation of identity is an important issue within this thesis. It is important to note that specific configurations of the subject or subject positions do not demonstrate immediate effect or offer a guarantee of reality just because they are articulated through discourse and reinforced by particular techniques. In any given organizational setting employees can accept, embrace, ignore, refuse or actively resist attempts to regulate their

²⁶⁰ M.Alvesson & H. Willmott, *Identity Regulation as Organizational Control*, Institute of Economic Research Working Paper Series, School of Economics and Management, Lund University, 2001, <http://www.lri.lu.se/en/publications/workingpapers?item=31>, viewed 11 November 2005.

²⁶¹ Alvesson & Willmott, pp. 19-24.

identity. Equally, when certain forms of subjectivity are reinforced by an array of discourses, institutional practices and structured differentials of reward and sanction they can over time achieve a stable pattern whereby they are viewed as normal, natural, necessary or inevitable. Thus particular configurations of power/knowledge /subjectivity are most successful when they are taken for granted and achieve a status of 'common sense' - a status which belies their history and their genesis as a humanly created artefact.

To summarize, there are two key points to note in relation to Foucault's work on power. The first is that Foucault's notion of power is non-judgmental. In contrast to the liberal paradigm where power has a purely negative connotation, Foucault contends that *power is not only negative it is also productive*. Foucault rejected the traditional sovereign or liberal view of power which proposes that:

Power takes the form of openly articulated prohibition, coercion, threats and punishment and has the effect of restricting the activities of the ruled by preventing them from doing what they want to do²⁶².

In its place Foucault posited a much more expansive theory of the practices and relations of power which included '... everything from overt forms of coercion and manipulation to the subtle exercise of authority and influence'²⁶³. Power, Foucault argues 'doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no ... it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network that runs through the whole social body'²⁶⁴.

The second point about Foucault's account on power is that it is non-subjective. This directly challenges the 'power as property' view promulgated by those who deploy a

²⁶² D. Weverman, 'Foucault's Reconception of Power', in *The Philosophical Forum*, Vol. 26, 1995, pp.189-217.

²⁶³ Weverman, 1995, p. 193

²⁶⁴ M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1980, p. 119.

sovereign view of power. Power relations *condition the actions of all actors* including those who are viewed as 'powerful'²⁶⁵. By focusing on the powerful/powerless binary, the identification of the locus of power and its manifestation as a particular type of relation – namely repression – we obscure the fact that power is 'a feature or ontological property of all people *in relation* to one another, and is active within all interaction and discourse'²⁶⁶.

Anna Bennett argues that power is:

...a dynamic active within all relations, both social, interpersonal and even intrapersonal. It can be repressive, enabling and considered differentially to be negative and/or positive at the same time. One cannot control its effects as it can be inadvertent or unconscious, self-defeating, self-producing, perverse and/or ambiguous. It is therefore composed of an indeterminate efficacy, rather than an intentional will or direction²⁶⁷.

Power is not the referent for a *single* relation, rather it is the referent for a multiplicity of relations and kinds of practices. In this regard, a Foucaultian understanding of power's mechanisms '... departs from conventional views, not in positing that they take wholly different forms, but in relaxing the definitional requirement that they must be determined or chosen by agents who use them to create desired effects on the actions of others, and/or effects from which they benefit'²⁶⁸. This relaxation is important in a study that engages the question of how power is exercised within contemporary academic settings.

Foucault has had a significant intellectual impact. This has continued unabated since his death in 1994. However, he is not without his critics. Many argue that his work provides little scope for the exercise of freedom and the prospects of human agency. Foucault's enduring concern with the intertwining of power/knowledge/subjectivity have

²⁶⁵ Hayward, *De-facing Power*, 1998, p. 261.

²⁶⁶ Anna Kate Bennett, *Re-cognising Power: A Discourse Analysis of Power Relations*, Ph.D Thesis, University of New South Wales, 2002, p. 3.

²⁶⁷ Anna Kate Bennett, 'Re-cognising Power: A Discourse Analysis of Power Relations, Doctoral Thesis, University of New South Wales, 2002, p. 3

²⁶⁸ Hayward, 1998, p. 263.

encouraged some to treat him as espousing a totalizing model of social arrangements that constructs a dystopian view of the world and constitutes people as mere pawns to the exercise of power. From my perspective, Foucault engages both the limits and prospects for freedom without founding his analysis in a theory which is either utopian in assuming people are inherently free or dystopian in constructing an essential dichotomy between the powerless and the powerful. In this regard, Foucault maintains a difficult but fruitful tension between being sceptical of what is and optimistic that things could be otherwise.

Foucault contends that in any moment or setting there are numerous and often conflicting discourses that circulate through the social apparatus. Within these contradiction we may recognize an excess of experience, desire, truth or sense of self that goes beyond that which is 'on offer'. As Ceri argues:

... the presence, or rather the effects, of such conflicting regimes of the person may explain our capacity to act outside expectations, to be beyond the imposed limits. That is, it is a context of multiplicity, and the play of complexity, that allows us to even consider the possibility of moving beyond limits. ...To see that we have possibilities of being otherwise ... is a matter, in some respects of understanding that though knowledge and power are joined in discourses that both preexist us and help to establish our particular existences, no single discourse is capable of covering all of reality²⁶⁹.

In other words the friction between discontinuities in the exercise of power, games of truth and modes of subjectivity offer an opportunity or provocation for us to critically investigate 'the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying'²⁷⁰.

For Foucault the prospects for freedom lie in thought. In this regard, a provocation provides a potential space for freedom in that it enables us to step back, think about and

²⁶⁹ C. Ceri, *Analyzing and reflecting upon limits: A Foucault influenced Study of Some Recent Events of Concern to Nursing*, Ph.D Thesis, University of Calgary, 2003, p. 88.

²⁷⁰ M. Foucault, *Ethics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, Vol. 1, Paul Rabinow (Ed.), Penguin, London, 1997, p. xxxv.

reflect on what we do, how we came to act in such a way and the effects of our conduct on our way of life and the social institutions that we are engaged with and engaged by. As Foucault contends 'Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem'.

In his later work Foucault suggested that we need to view our selves as a work of art. In this regard, Foucault exults us to be actively engaged in our own life, that is, to engage the relations of power and freedom that impact upon what we can think, be and do in order to be as creative as possible in the construction of our own existence. By thinking and understanding ourselves as a work of art we can refuse to be the 'who' that is constituted through the social conditions that we are unavoidably immersed in. For Foucault, the requirement to engage in critique and the prospects for inventiveness is a never-ending:

... to say that there cannot be a society without power relations is not to say either that those which are established are necessary, or, in any case, that power constitutes a fatality at the heart of societies, such that it cannot be undermined. Instead I would say that the analysis, elaboration, and bringing into question relations and the "agonism" between power relations and the intransitivity of freedom is a permanent political task²⁷¹.

Reflecting on the self as a problem provides an opportunity for micro-emancipation, but it doesn't necessarily challenge the limits to our existence that are conditioned by contemporary relations of power in the social body. Melissa Orlie argues that it is imperative that we go beyond self-consciousness. Living as freely and responsibly as possible entails that we must also care for others. In other words we must attend to the ways that our imbrication in governing relations is not only injurious to our selves but potentially injurious to others. Our actions contribute to the relations of power and freedom that form the conditions of our own existence, what we can be, do think and want and the existence of others. Orlie argues:

²⁷¹ Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power" in Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed. Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1983, p. 222.

Responsibility becomes a problem when we find that we can neither recognize the harm brought to others by our imbrication in social rules and their governing ways of envisioning and making the world, nor imagine how to alleviate such harm. Freedom becomes a problem as our own and others' actions are thwarted by constrictive social patterns and threatened by unthinking social behavior. These problems are intimately related, for our responsibility and calculability govern ourselves as well as others²⁷².

Orlie contends that in order to exercise freedom in a thoughtful and responsible way we must politically engage the limits of our selves, others and the world we both constitute and are constituted by. Drawing on the work of Hannah Arendt, Orlie provides some detail to the 'permanent political task' that Foucault calls for. Orlie contends:

...our relations are political when we seek to fathom and acknowledge our effects on one another and open them to specifically political action. Politics is not so much a realm or sphere we enter as it is a form of relation we undertake. Political spaces do not simply reveal or provide a means of furthering our will to make ourselves and the world. Rather, in political spaces we encounter others who call our power effects to our attention, and we do likewise²⁷³

In this regard, power relations diminish the prospects for political freedom not only by encouraging complicity and conformity but also by engendering the isolation or withdrawal of people who are affected by and implicated in the exercise and reproduction of a given array of power relations.

Rather than stepping outside of power relations, the political practice of freedom shifts the boundaries in terms of what we can do, want, think or be. Contrary to the sovereign view of freedom embedded in liberal thought, we cannot find a neutral space outside of power relations. Power is ubiquitous in producing the conditions of our existence – for better and for worse. Power relations constitute the boundaries to action for all social actors, not just 'the powerless'²⁷⁴. In effect, power makes the world go round – we can

²⁷² Melissa Orlie, *Living Ethically, Acting Politically*, Cornell University Press, London, 1997, p. 12.

²⁷³ Orlie, p. 79.

²⁷⁴ Hayward, 2000.

never step outside of it but we can act – responsibly and thoughtfully – into power relations to change ‘the shape of the world’ and thus people’s experiences of it. The potential fields of action for academics includes sites within the university itself and those that constitute the multiple publics that exist and interact beyond the university’s walls.

Like Foucault, Clarissa Hayward argues that we need to understand power-relations as falling along a continuum ‘...one end-point of which is a state of domination. At the other end are relations that promote participants’ political freedom...’²⁷⁵. The proposition that there is no space free from power does not mean that we cannot critically analyse the effects of power on freedom. However, it does require a shift in the focus or grounds upon which we can criticise power relations²⁷⁶. Instead of critically examining the distribution of power within the university, Hayward’s work suggests that an analysis of the freedom of academics needs to make visible the ‘...differential impact of social practices, institutional norms etc.’, not only on ‘actors’ individual liberties but also on their ability to be active participants ‘in shaping the conditions of their collective existence’²⁷⁷.

To undertake a critical analysis of power relations within a given setting, in this instance select Australian universities, we need to ask ‘How do power’s mechanisms define the (im)possible, the (im)probable, the natural, the normal, what counts as a problem?’²⁷⁸ In analyzing the response to these questions we need to make visible and criticize power relations that limit academics’ capacities to act upon the limits of their existence both within and outside the university. The focus of a critical analysis of power relations is patterned asymmetries in the social capacity to act. However, the movement away from a dichotomized understanding means that these asymmetries should not be reduced ‘...to qualitatively distinguishable states of “powerfulness” and “powerlessness”’²⁷⁹.

²⁷⁵ Hayward, 2000, p. 166.

²⁷⁶ Hayward, 2000.

²⁷⁷ Hayward, 2000, p. 39.

²⁷⁸ Hayward, 2000, p. 35

²⁷⁹ Hayward, 2000, p. 35.

Hayward introduces a democratic and an agonistic focus into the analysis of power relations. Rather than positioning constraints of negative liberty as the sole object of critique, Hayward encourages an alternative, suggesting that we also need to identify and challenge those power relations that exclude people from participation in norm-making within a given setting and/or depoliticize key boundaries to social action. The question then becomes - to what extent do power relations promote freedom (in all its dimensions) or states of domination?

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have argued that we need to think more broadly about the exercise of power and freedom in academia. Instead of focusing on the most extreme exercises of power we need to explore what is mundane and commonplace in university power relations. The challenge is to make visible the multitude of ways that academics are governed or encouraged to govern themselves in relation to particular norms. This is not to say that we won't be subject to acts of suppression. But it is to say that we are subject to power in ways that go beyond the repressive.

This shift in the way that we understand power is important in and of itself but also because it supports a rethinking of freedom. More specifically, this shift reinforces the importance of incorporating a political dimension into our understanding of freedom. If power works to define the possible and desirable then our understanding of the uses of freedom must include acts that challenge these boundaries. Freedom in this regard is a concrete political practice that seeks to dispute and modify the rules that constrain and enable action within academia. It is a practice of engagement, not a space of disengagement. Rather than speaking of an essential freedom that we have or possess, freedom is most usefully conceived as something we do. The politics of the university are a game where exercises of power shape the rules of what we can do, be want and think

and exercises of political freedom seek to modify these rules, to challenge them and to deny their self-evidence.

Changing the way we understand power and freedom has implications for the way we research academic freedom. The conventional wisdom on academic freedom has limited the questions raised about power relations in contemporary universities. Researchers have focused their attention on the question of who is doing what to whom? Research tools are constructed which ask academics if they have been prevented from publishing their research findings, teaching their chosen courses or researching topics according to their own interests. If there is no identifiable act of prohibition, then the person is deemed to be 'outside' of powers' reach and thus free. Broadening our understanding of what counts as an exercise of power and a practice of freedom enables different questions to be asked. In other words, instead of asking how power prohibits freedom, we need to explore the ways in which power and freedom shape each other within Australian universities.

The following three chapters represent the body of this study. In these chapters I explore the 'Enterprise University' from the viewpoint of academics working in three different university types. In this regard I use these chapters to map commonalities and differences between universities and university types in regard to the way in power is exercised and its effects on the freedom of academics.

Q: How does the pressure come down?

In different ways there's the formal pressure in the form of: these are the norms that are expected by the University for functioning research academics that are expressed in your performance appraisals and expressed in applications for promotions. So, every year you have to do a performance appraisal and every year they basically say, what have you done? Is it good enough? And if you make a squeak about wanting a promotion, you're told whether or not you've got a snowball's chance in hell and what you have to do to get near it and if you go to the formal HRM briefings on tenure and promotion, they make it very clear what the norms are and they're high. Don't even bother applying, unless you've got this, because you won't get anywhere – it's like, fuck! And then, there's the informal stuff too. There's a culture in this school, unspoken largely, of competition, so it's a very competitive place (Chase, Performative University)²⁸⁰.

Chapter Four: Life in the Enterprise University: The view from the Sandstones

This is the first chapter in which I explore the character and conditions of academic work within a particular university type. This chapter focuses on the perceptions and experiences of academics from two of the so-called Sandstone universities. The Sandstones are so-named because they all have some sandstone buildings as part of their main campus. Given that these universities were the first-founded in their respective state this grouping is made up of the oldest universities in Australia. As Marginson and Considine point out “What distinguishes the Sandstones is both that they have more of a past to draw on, *and* that their particular model of higher education has a greater capacity to use the past”²⁸¹. The Sandstones are entrenched at the top of the hierarchy of Australian universities. These institutions draw on their history and accumulated political economy and social status to maintain their position and to close off the group

²⁸⁰ Quote from the transcript of a social work academic from a university I call the Performative University.

²⁸¹ S. Marginson & M. Considine, *The Enterprise University: Power, Governance and Reinvention in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 191.

to potential competitors²⁸². In this regard 'Other worldly rhetoric survives, but the Sandstones are as utilitarian as other institutions. They work very hard to sustain research reputation and the flow of high-scoring school-leavers'²⁸³.

In the interviews conducted for this study, one of the Sandstone universities I call the Performative University, stood out as both exemplary and exceptional. It was exemplary in regard to the extent that it manifests the key characteristics associated with the Enterprise University as an ideal type and exceptional in terms of the intensity of its power relations and the means by which academic activity is regulated in this university compared to other universities. In this first half of this chapter I detail the exemplary and exceptional aspects of this university. I then turn to the experiences and arrangements of another Sandstone I call the Traditional University in order to chart the similarities and differences in the relations between power and freedom in different settings within the Australian higher education system.

The Performative University

The Performative University, like most other Sandstones, can lay claim to inherited advantages, a substantial resource base and a high level of social status which is readily reproduced. The comparatively long history of this sandstone university means that it is easily able to add social, economic and academic capital to its already significant high standing and reinforce its privilege. As one academic member of the Performative University noted:

This university in particular and I think this is probably one of the better ones, has opportunities running down the corridors all the time. There's just opportunity after opportunity and people come to you that's the upside. ... For example, I went to America a couple of years ago and decided to go to [a prestigious American university] to talk to the dean there and he immediately said 'yes you're

²⁸² Marginson & Considine, 2000, p. 191.

²⁸³ Marginson & Considine, 2000, p. 194.

from our equivalent in Australia and the doors just opened. ... These doors just opened on the reputation of the institution (Chase).

Reputation plays an important part in the practices and relations of power within this university. Academics in the Performative University are encouraged to understand themselves as being privileged to work there – as having the good fortune of being able to identify themselves as a member of a highly reputable institution. In this regard power is exercised through the construction of a discourse in which the university and its academics are understood as elite:

You're meant to feel ... privileged because you have a job here, because it's a university people would want to come and work at So you're meant to feel, not made to but I think expected to feel a little bit that you probably need to work harder and make sure you keep your form in, because there are others that would take your job (Ashton)²⁸⁴.

In this regard the Performative University encourages its academics to identify with the university and to understand that their status and material benefits are linked to the relationship they have with it and not with their membership of a discipline, profession or 'community of scholars'. In other words academics are encouraged to constitute their identity in a way that gives primary allegiance to their institution. Being a member of the Performative University is constituted as a more important identity marker than being a social worker, academic, union member, woman etc.

The primacy given to the institutional identity and the way in which goods (status/resources) are linked to membership enables power to be exercised by means of a regime of values and thus expectations. This regime is most clearly articulated by a middle manager working in the Performative University:

²⁸⁴ I have used androgynous names rather than academic level to identify the participants because the participants come from relatively small schools and thus if there are few people who hold a particular academic appointment then they are easily identified by other colleagues who know the research was undertaken at their university because they participated in it.

The bottom line is that universities are large corporate organisations and if you're employed by a university, you are expected to work towards the overall goals of that university, if you don't approve the goals of the university and you don't agree with the work you are expected and asked to do and the outcomes that you are expected to achieve, then you are probably not working for the right kind of organisation or the right organisation (Phoenix).

What this translates into is an expectation of elite performance especially in research. As the same manager put it:

If you are going to work in [X university] you have to understand that there's a high expectation in terms of research outcomes and research productivity and post graduate supervision. If you just wanted to go on teaching graduates then you're possibly better off somewhere else. That's not restricting what you think or what you say but it is restricting the sort of work that you do because we have certain aspirations for the university which may be the same or different. So if you're going to take a job at a large corporate organisation which all universities, ... then you've got to see the direction you want to go, and the goals for yourself are consistent with the organisation – if they're not consistent or they gradually become less and less consistent with it over time, then you probably shouldn't be in this organisation but that's the same with whomever. Anybody who works for or is going to take a job in a large corporate law firm, and your values and what you want to do are strongly dissonant with what that law firm is doing then you should be somewhere else and not claiming that you've got freedom to do what you want to do and they've got the right to sack you (Phoenix).

The construction of universities as large corporate organizations and academics as the same as any other worker in a large corporate firm, is markedly different to the discourse of the traditional university which contends that the institution has no existence, no identity beyond the ideals and values associated with academic knowledge production. Raymond Gaita provides an example of this discourse in arguing that the university is the site where academics practice their 'vocation'. What makes a university a university on Gaita's account is that it is a home to the life of the mind, to the engagement of academic study for its own sake, its own intrinsic worth:

It takes time to learn what a university is, and one cannot learn it from outside. It is learning that comes from inwardness with values slowly perceived through

living the life of the mind in community with fine exemplars of it, and learning which awakens desires we never had, in response to values we had never before seen²⁸⁵.

In this discourse about the 'idea of the university' the expectations for the university are no more and no less than the expectations and aspirations that academics have for themselves as academics and for the so called 'community of scholars'. Within this more traditional model academics identify first and foremost with the discipline within which they practice their vocation.

Hugh Willmott argues that the 'culture' of organizations, their values, goals, missions and identity, 'emerged as a central theme in the field of management and organizational studies' during the 1980's²⁸⁶:

... the project of strengthening corporate culture was promoted by the gurus of excellence and enthusiastically endorsed by proponents of other popular flavours of the decade, such as human resource management and total quality management. This interest in culture as an instrument of competitive advantage has been paralleled and complemented by growing attention to the symbolic dimensions of organizational life. According to its leading authorities, the 'strengthening' of corporate culture enhances organizational performance by securing greater commitment and flexibility from employees. Improvements in productivity and quality, it is argued, flow from corporate cultures that systematically recognize and reward individuals, symbolically and materially, for identifying their sense of purpose with the values that are designed into the organization²⁸⁷.

One of the effects of the construction of universities as 'large corporate organisations', and the increased focus on the culture of the university is that higher education managers within Australian universities have come to preside over an expanded managerial domain

²⁸⁵ R. Gaita, 'The University: Is it Finished', S Cooper, J Hinkson & G Sharp (eds.), *Scholars and Entrepreneurs*, Arena Publications, North Carlton, 2000, pp. 91-108.

²⁸⁶ H. Willmott, 'Strength is ignorance; Slavery is freedom: managing culture in modern organizations', *Journal of Management Studies* vol. 30, no. 4, 1993, p. 515.

²⁸⁷ Willmott, 1993, p. 515.

which legitimates their authority to determine the key conditions in which academic activity is conducted:

The momentum for expansion in the number, authority and professionalism of academic managers was galvanized by the ideology inherent in management science and organizational adaptation. The core premises of these literatures position campus leaders and key administrators as managers who diagnose and prescribe organizational well being²⁸⁸.

The privileging of organizational goals and the right of management to enforce these is warranted on the basis of survival. Indeed the institutionalization of a hierarchy of command – obedience is premised on the belief that managerial authority is ‘necessary, efficient and the only way to avoid disaster’²⁸⁹. This disaster discourse is used by the middle manager at this university to legitimate the increased regulation of academic activity:

We’re in a competitive international market place basically ... the people who aren’t able to compete don’t matter and that’s the same for universities. ... you’ve got to ensure that the organisation is competitive in order to survive and if that means that you’ve then got to ensure that your employees assist in the organisation’s competitiveness according to the goals you’ve set..., then you’re going to have to manage them to ensure that is achieved (Phoenix).

In this regard, the privileging of management in organizational goal setting and performance monitoring is essentialised in terms of both the sociological and popular understandings of this terms in that it is constructed as inherent to every ‘large corporate’ organization and therefore as a natural and normal feature of how power is to be exercised and essentialised in terms of it being an imperative.

²⁸⁸ P. Gumport, ‘The Organisation of Knowledge: Imperatives for Continuity and Change in Higher Education’ in I Bleiklie & M Henkel (eds.) *Governing Knowledge: A Study of Continuity and Change in Higher Education*, 2005, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, p. 122.

²⁸⁹ D. Rowlands, ‘Privatisation and managerial Ideology’, cited in G Anderson, *Playing Their Game: An Exploration of Academic Resistance in the Managerial University*, unpublished doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Western Sydney, 2005, p. 113.

The survival discourse and its integration with a managerial imperative are significant in terms of the exercise of power because they provide for a definitive basis for making judgments on 'correct' action when it comes to tensions between ways of being, doing and thinking. In other words these discourses enable the continuity of a privileged discourse in the face of contradiction. For example, at the start of the interview the middle manager defined academic freedom as follows:

What academic freedom means to me is that people have the right to carry out their research and to a certain extent their teaching, without being directed into what they should research, how they should do it and how they express their findings. That's at the highest level and in teaching that they have the freedom to espouse a range of viewpoints, including some that may be unpopular, and I suppose that they also have the right to speak out on issues that they claim to know something about... (Phoenix).

However, the tensions between this relatively unconditional and rather traditional construction of academic freedom and the idea that universities as large corporate organizations have a right to exercise their management imperative, was foregrounded later in the interview when the respondent redefined academic freedom as 'really, the right to do research and teaching in line with market reality'. In contrast to the traditional discourse of academic freedom as freedom from necessity, the re-constitution of high education as an 'industry' enables academic activity to be positioned in a way that surrenders freedom to necessity.

Wilkinson et al observe that corporate culture regimes seek to 'immerse employees into the logic of the market'²⁹⁰. In this regard, 'when corporate cultures are strengthened, employees are encouraged to devote themselves to its values and products, and to assess their own worth'²⁹¹ and the conditions of their existence in these terms. As Miller and Rose have argued 'The 'autonomous' subjectivity of the productive individual has become

²⁹⁰ A. Wilkinson, P. Allen & A. Snappe 'TQM and the management of labour', cited in H Willmott, 1993, p. 522.

²⁹¹ Willmott, op. cit, p. 522.

a central economic resource; such programmes promise to turn autonomy into an ally of economic success²⁹². The corporate culture of the Performative University leaves academics in no doubt as to what is valued and what is expected of them:

This university is a research university, it doesn't pull its punches about that – that's what we do here, everything else has to fit in around that. That's what's admired, that's the currency – it's the only currency (Chase).

I really think that where the rewards are in the university is heavily geared in this institution towards research (Angel).

In this regard the Performative University constructs a hierarchy of academic activity, as a normative framework about what is desirable and worthy of pursuit and what isn't. Whilst research is given primacy not all research is equal. At the top of the hierarchy is large income-generating projects including, but not limited to, ARC Discovery grants, NHMRC funding and ARC Linkage grants. Small consultancies and research funded by the university are 'also rans' as one respondent put it. This hierarchy is constituted and reinforced in a number of ways. The following example was provided by one of the respondents:

I remember when I was first inducted ... going along to one of the research seminars at X which is our common arm for the commercialization and research activities here in the university and they brought this slide show with different activities you might be pursuing in terms of research and they showed this homeless person and said this is not the sort of research you will be pursuing because its, you know... it isn't going to be a big income generator or doesn't have much commercialization capacity... (Ashton).

Teaching is secondary to research and this has a hierarchy of its own with postgraduate supervision constructed as the most prestigious while the attraction of international fee paying students is understood as highly desirable. Undergraduate teaching, particularly first year and field education are constructed as the least prestigious kinds of teaching.

²⁹² P Miller & N Rose, 'Political power beyond the State: problematics of government', *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 3, Is. 2, 1992, p. 26.

These hierarchies are reflected in and constituted by the status attached to committee roles such as the Director of Research and Director of Postgraduate Studies. The committee which oversees the undergraduate program was described by a number of interviewees as a 'poisoned chalice' (Chase/Angel).

Community service is of equal status with teaching. Within the Performative University community service is often constructed as service to the university or to a professional community. The expectation of community service as service to the university relate to committee memberships. However, proof of membership is insufficient. In order for this service to be viewed favourably in performance appraisal process academics need to demonstrate that they have made a contribution in some way.

You're not allowed to just prove you've been on a committee; you've got to prove that you made a difference ...

Q. How do you do that?

Well the way that you do that is you think up all these fucking projects to drive other people insane with. Now I'll give you an example of one that's driving me personally insane at the moment. One of my dear colleagues has decided that she wants to make a splash as being Director of Post Graduate Research in the school by coming up with the idea of a Research Higher Degree Student Professional Portfolio wherein I sit down with my Ph.D students who are, to a boy and girl, profoundly disinterested in this and ... we work out on an annual basis just what graduate attributes they've learnt as part of their Ph.D and how this is positioning them to be successful in whatever it is they want to do post – so there's your Professional Development Research Portfolio and graduate attributes – it's just crap (Chase).

The expectations of the Performative University in all facets of academic activity are based on 'outcomes' rather than as the willingness to engage in particular activities and the work effort contributed. The evaluation of outcomes is based on the judgment of others and is often relative. For example, ARC grants are competitive with more applications than funding. To win an ARC grant a researcher's application has to be adjudged as highly regarded in its own right and relative to all other proposals within the same

funding stream. In this regard, there are no set benchmarks for performance. As competition increases so getting an 'outcome' gets harder and meeting performance requirements become more difficult. As the following respondent suggests this was already the experience of academics at this university:

... the downside of a place like here is the workload is phenomenal. You're only as good as the next thing you do, its just continually do more, more, more – strive, strive more – get higher, get higher, never stop and that is completely my experience. Its completely different at X university [respondents previous appointment] there's hardly any pressure there really. Here there's huge, huge expectations and pressure to perform, and to perform very well and it doesn't peg level, it keeps going up and you get to the point where you think – fuck, can I keep this up for another ten to fifteen years until I can legitimately retire with sufficient superannuation to keep me off the aged pension (Chase).

The expectations of the Performative University are enacted through formalised practices such as induction regimes, performance appraisals, workload documents and teaching evaluations. The induction process endeavours to engender an appropriate institutional identification in that it's '...all about identifying with the X university badge, ... of understanding that you've come to one of the leading universities' (Ashton). This initial practice of identity regulation is reinforced through staff newsletters and announcements that detail institutional success stories. However, institutional recognition and acknowledgement is patchy as the following exchange with Chase highlights:

There's a lot of boasting going on. Around ARC time there's a lot of talk about the various stages, how many applications they've put in, how many or what the assessor's reports were like. For a long time we had this newsletter that went out every month and it had everybody's publications, so people who had published in that month were star features. That's coming back again and then there's the congratulations in the staff meetings – so this month, we'd like to congratulate so and so who's had their book launched or blah, blah, blah.

Q: Are there things that don't rate a mention?

What doesn't rate a mention is the vast amount of administrative work that certain people do. Like for example, X directorship which is a huge, fucking thankless, revolting task and it's just never mentioned – and it's sort of like so what. So that sort of mind numbing work that has to go on in any academic department is not discussed. It's just not discussed. And other things that don't rate in terms of work, teaching certainly – in terms of teaching excellence if anyone gets a teaching award then that gets slavish nodding but otherwise, no. How well your student ratings are, you wouldn't know – that's not talked about. Other things are not talked about. Last year I got invited to give a keynote speech at a conference on the future of social work – nobody said a word – probably they hate my guts. One of my other colleagues and I got invited [to America] to ... do a special symposium, now they're paying – they're doing a special symposium on social welfare reform – not a mention.

Q: Are those things that would rate on your performance review?

Oh yeah, oh fuck yeah they count. You've got to be able to prove international reputation – and that's proof. [They] paid my fare that means somebody in America knows who I am.

Indeed, the performance management system is one of 'the main ways in which academics are managed' within the Performative University (Phoenix). The academic staff appraisal regime is very formal at this university, much highly formalised and appears to be much more systematic than at any other university examined in this study. As part of the process academics must prepare a personal and professional development plan and an academic portfolio of achievement which covers teaching, scholarship/research and original achievement, service, and any staff development activities undertaken during the review year. If the academic has undertaken a sabbatical or period of research leave during the review year or intends doing so in the next 18 months then a report detailing the outcomes of any sabbatical leave undertaken or those expected if sabbatical leave is proposed must also be provided. Finally, the academic must provide the details of referees/assessors who can attest to the quality of the academics teaching and research performance if the staff member is intending to apply for continuing appointment or promotion.

An annual review meeting is conducted between the academic and his or her supervisor which is usually the head of school or another academic (level C or above) who has been approved to act as the persons supervisor. According the university's policy statement on performance review the meeting begins with a review of 'facts'. These describe as objective matters which are already on record. The meeting is then to proceed onto a discussion whereby the performance of the academic is assessed in relation to the level of achievement reached and why. The policy suggests that where possible the academic and the supervisor should reach consensus on the assessment of performance and the desired improvement/activity for the coming year.

The Performative University's performance management process is exemplary and exceptional in a number of ways. Firstly, as suggested previously, the expectations about staff performance seem to be pegged at a level higher than at any other university covered by this research. To be a considered a good academic you have to:

Publish internationally... and you have to be able to demonstrate excellence in teaching because you've got to have good teaching evaluations there's no resiling from that, say its out of a scale of 1 to 5 – if you get consistently below a 3 you'd be in real trouble. You've, got to publish. The standard has risen – they would say 3 to 4 refereed articles in prestigious journal a year. Preferably you should also be writing a book or books, you should be successful in competitive grants schemes, you should be supervising students successfully to completion and what's more they should be getting jobs in prestigious universities or they should be getting post-docs. So you're not only supervising to completion, you're supervising geniuses to completion. Of course on top of that is the engagement with academic governance (Chase).

In addition, being a good academic i.e., one who is performing to the university's expectations requires ongoing attention to how you can do more. The professional plan which must be completed annually as part of the performance review includes a checklist which encourages academics to think through how they can do a better job.

In this regard the idea that self regulation has been replaced by managerial regulation is misleading. Self regulation has been imbricated with managerial regulation in a way that achieves a much more intense power relation, one which serves to produce a 'correct' professional identity and a complementary mode of practicing being a certain kind of person and performing the appropriate academic activities.

Another exceptional and exemplary aspect of performance management at the Performative University is its degree of specificity. The Performative University specifies which journals/book publishers academics should try to have their work published in or by and have established a four-tier hierarchy of prestige for this purpose. First tier journals are those with a 'very high international reputation' described as those that are considered to be the leading journal in the field or that have an editorial board and peer review process that is international and that includes relatively high profile researchers in the field. Journals that have a rigorous review process evidenced by high rejection rates can also be categorised as tier one as can journals that are considered to be 'cutting edge' and or have a very high impact on the discipline internationally. Books and research paper/reports are also judged according to these criteria. In comparison, Tier 4 journals are those that are peer reviewed but are deemed to have only a national or local readership, interest or impact.

Finally, in distinction to other sites, the academics perceive these processes as being significant in the continuation and advancement of their careers. Academics at the Performative University expect that management will use the process to dismiss staff deemed to be underperforming. Several respondents stated during interview that they did not expect a current employee to be offered a continuing position. Within this faculty, very few are exempt from performance appraisal²⁹³. It occurs with almost every

²⁹³ According to university policy, if an academic is at the top of the relevant pay scale, on a continuing appointment and not planning sabbatical in the next 18 months or promotion in the next two years then the review need only be held every second year. The staff member can request it be held annually as can the supervisor if they have any performance-related concerns.

member of staff, once a year and continues after the confirmation of tenure. Probationers are subject to intense appraisal of their performance and can be on probation for lengthy periods of time:

For three years I am on probation which really means something at x university. You know... sixty page review documents and things like that. It's not just done as a rubber stamp – you have to prove that you are worth appointing (Angel).

I'm on a continuing appointment with a probation period of five years, some people got three year probations, I seem to have got a five year one, there's a couple of others with it as well (Ashton).

The regime of probation is an exercise of power that charges the academic as guilty – of insufficient performance – until proven otherwise. In other words, the institution does not have to prove inadequate performance because the responsibility lies with the individual academic to put forward a case for appointment. The extended probationary period, which in some cases amount to half the entitlement period for long service leave, rely on negative emotions such as fear and insecurity to encourage ongoing attention to outcomes on the part of the probationer and to extract high levels of performance. In this regard, academics at this university are made responsible for monitoring and governing their own performance over time and constructing a worthy account of themselves.

In effect, the appraisal regimes at the Performative University can be understood as a system of surveillance which endeavour to produce compliant self regulatory employees. Foucault has argued that obedience, examination and confession form an ensemble of subjugation. Foucault identifies monastic institutions as one site – although an exemplary one – in which this ensemble or surveillance is practices:

In these monastic institutions the procedures of confession and self-examination are in fact framed by very strict rules of obedience to one's spiritual director. But it is no longer just signs of obedience and marks of respect that are expected of the person being guided; he will have to put the truth of his desire into discourse before an other (his superior). The government of men demands not only acts of obedience and submission from those who are led, but also 'truth activities', which

have the peculiar feature that the subject is not only required to tell the truth but must tell the truth about himself²⁹⁴.

In a previous section of this lecture series on The Hermeneutics of the Subject, Foucault proposed to:

... consider it a highly significant event in the relations between the subject and truth when truth-telling about oneself became a condition of salvation, a fundamental principle in the subject's relationship to himself, and a necessary element in the individual's membership of a community. The day, if you like, when refusal to confess at least once a year was grounds for excommunication²⁹⁵.

Universities have a long history of treating themselves as a monastic institution. However, traditionally this has been an observation about the content of their scholastic endeavours or their separation from the rest of society, and not as a statement about the form of power relations or their reliance on an annual 'confession' of sins about lapses in individual performativity or the failure to achieve a perfectly competitive soul.

The performance appraisal system is complemented by a significant accountability regime in relation to teaching and the students' experience of their education. These evaluations are primarily based on student opinion surveys. Bedggood and Pollard note that these surveys have been increasingly used since the late 1980's²⁹⁶. They were introduced as part of the establishment of quality management initiatives into the university sector. Bedggood and Pollard examined eight Australian universities and found marked differences in the way in which student surveys had been implemented. In

²⁹⁴ F. Gros, 'Course Context' in F Gros (ed.) *Michel Foucault, The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Palgrave, New York, 2005, p. 510.

²⁹⁵ M Foucault, F Gros (ed.) *Michel Foucault, The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Palgrave, New York, 2005, p. 364.

²⁹⁶ R.R Bedggood & R. J. Pollard, 'Uses and misuses of student opinion surveys in eight Australian Universities', *Australian Journal of Education*, vol. 43, no. 2, 1999, pp. 129-141.

some institutions student evaluation was voluntary, while in others it was compulsory. In the Performative University, organisational policies require faculties and schools to evaluate teaching, and the performance appraisal regime requires academics to present teaching data as part of their academic achievement portfolio. Bedggood and Pollard are critical of the use of student opinion surveys in performance appraisal contending that the data collected commonly lack validity and reliability²⁹⁷. A number of managers from the universities studied by Bedggood and Pollard support this view arguing that interpreting the results as evidence of 'good' or 'bad' teaching would be a misuse of the data and one that is potentially damaging for academics²⁹⁸. These hesitations are not evident in the Performative University. Like many other higher education institutions, the Performative University has established formalised evaluations of programmes and teaching:

The ... reality is that more and more how we teach is dictated by central policy. A lot of attention is payed to it, a lot of attention is focussed on teaching, whereas once you would have been doing pretty well what you liked and now it's not like that at all. How you do what you do is actively monitored.

Q: For example?

Well you have the evaluations. Teaching evaluations and course evaluations which are just standardised assessment evaluation tools. The teaching evaluations are private within industrial agreements that we've had, they remain private. The course evaluations are all public evaluations and it's put up on the web sites and potential students and actual students and any staff member can access at any one time to see whether my values on x course are good bad or indifferent, so we're far more open. What we do is open to scrutiny.

You get shitty evaluations not only are you never going to get a promotion but you mightn't get a continuing appointment. You get into trouble from the head of school (Chase).

²⁹⁷ Bedggood and Pollard, 1999.

²⁹⁸ Bedggood and Pollard, 1999.

The introduction of student evaluation surveys has been one way in which the discourse of student as customer has been constituted within the university sector. Jennifer Sappy undertook research in universities across the east coast to explore the commodification of higher education and its implications for the academic labour process²⁹⁹. Sappy notes:

At the organisational level, strong market focused universities delivered higher education as a service encounter, with management constructing the student as 'customer' and reconstructing the employee in response to management's perceptions of customer wants. It was significant that at one particular employing institution executive management had used the term 'customer' in its official publications, although academic labour did not necessarily share this view. Irrespective of how they viewed their own role, all academic respondents across institutions considered that their students perceived themselves as customers of their university, and more specifically, of the individual academic³⁰⁰.

This experience was talked about quite forcefully by one of the academics employed by the Performative University:

The students are very active in the governing of academics. Almost it feels like it's their primary purpose to be here is to make sure we toe the line in the way that they want. They're probably one of the greatest reasons about why academic life is going to the dogs and it's absolutely related to fees, absolutely. They have now taken on board the identity of customer and are very assertive in that identity and they can make your life a misery. If you don't... they complain at the drop of a hat (Drew).

In this regard, a discourse of 'students-as-customers' encourages academics to regulate their activity as to attend to the question of student satisfaction. The need to attract students, both fee-paying and publicly-supported, has seen a rise in management directives that require academics to 'massage the experience of students...so they feel

²⁹⁹ J. Sappey 'The commodification of higher education: Flexible delivery and its implications for the academic labour process' in M. Baird, R. Cooper and M. Westcott, (Eds.), *Reworking Work: Proceedings of the 19th Conference of the Association of Industrial Relations Academics of Australia and New Zealand*, University of Sydney, 2005, pp. 495-502,

³⁰⁰ Sappey, 2005, p. 498.

loved because the university wants their money but basically doesn't care – profoundly does not care – about undergraduates' (Chase).

The Performative University has constructed a hierarchy of accountability to give effect to what it calls its 'quality agenda' The school teaching and learning committee reports to a faculty teaching and learning committee which, in turn, reports to a university-wide teaching and learning committee. The discourse of accountability and quality has seen the introduction of two key initiatives which are changing the relations between power and freedom in the area of teaching. These have included the implementation of graduate attributes and the standardisation of course outlines/profiles. The first initiative was experienced by respondents as a 'top down' initiative that was time consuming. It was also viewed with scepticism in terms of the intentions of the initiative and how they have been met:

Two years ago the university decided that it was going to do a thing called graduate attributes. So it came all the way down here and then I had to go and do every fucking social work subject. First we had to translate the university generic attributes into graduate attributes for the Bachelor of Social Work and then people had to then go to their subjects and work with me and nominate what graduate attributes were being met, were being taught, were being created in that particular course and then you had to demonstrate how the assessment is related to the attainment of those particular attributes. I mean this is a really big tool, the graduate attributes, before you know it you're all marching to the same tune and they did an evaluation last year of the students on their exits and they asked them about us and graduate attributes and we got into trouble because we didn't do what we said we were going to do, so, we're all in the poo!

People made all these claims but the students couldn't make the connections between what we were claiming and what they were being taught. I actually put that down more to students because they rarely make those sorts of meta-analytical connections. Then we were told that what we needed to do was remind them on a regular basis throughout the course that this was the graduate attribute that was supposed to be taught at this particular time (Chase).

For a number of academics I interviewed, graduate attributes represent an incursion into the teaching practice of academic staff. Academics at this university were skeptical about graduate attributes and the extent to which they actually develop students' competence as opposed to their capacity to tell the right story about themselves and their experience at the institution:

... they think that the students are actually going to get these graduate attributes and they're better when they go out of here and say to prospective employers 'I've got all these graduate attributes, I can do all these wonderful things' and that they're better than having a statement of an academic record and saying what subjects they've done. I said well; how can it be better either you've got a huge line of specific graduate attributes that you just flounder the employer and they wouldn't look at it or you have a smaller number of less specific ones that don't tell the employer anything. Why is that going to be any better or worse than what we've already got? And so, we've got this huge momentum of institutional bureaucracy, making people do all this extra work for what I see as a totally, poorly thought out agenda and you don't have any capacity to change that... (Sage)

This sense of a lack of a voice is also experienced in relation to the development of course outlines where academics are experiencing a decrease in personal decision - making about their content and format:

What we put into a course profile is increasingly dictated by central teaching and learning and you have to have these elements in the course profile (Drew).

Academics express somewhat more contradictory responses to the introduction of standardised course outlines. On one hand they acknowledge that it can assist in the provision of good teaching. However, it is also experienced as a move that reduces the prospects for creativity in teaching:

When you start micro-managing people at that level, where's the creativity? Like I want to have a different sort of assessment but it doesn't fit into a little model coming out from the education people (Drew).

These practices of regulation are going to become even less contestable with moves to place course profiles on an electronic platform. Indeed, technology has enabled a greater degree of uniformity and conformity in the preparation of teaching material and practices of student management. For example, the allocation of students to tutorial groups is now done online. When a tutorial group reaches its maximum number, students are automatically directed to another group. However, technology also enables the student population to govern academic activity:

Last semester they started on blackboard. We had another system which was ok then all of a sudden they decided they were going to move to new software. You could see all the collective shoulders of the academics going ... more fucking software that we have to learn. So we all dutifully trotted off to these training programmes on blackboard and it scared the living shit out of me because ... the multi-functionality of the thing terrified me... it can do so much. What happens then is the baseline expectation ratchets up and up and up and up and up and up and up and if you don't use the functions they come and scream and shriek. So there's a function on blackboard called grade book where you can set it up so that every piece of assessment they get you enter and then they can see it and they can work out their running total and also where they compare against everybody else, they can see how they're tracking which is nice and dandy but somebody's got to upload the data (Chase).

The use of email has also been instrumental in the creation of expectations and the subsequent rise in workloads. In the words of the middle manager, 'People are buried under a huge amount of demand from student emails. Students expect instantaneous responses and so people are on duty eight to ten hours a day' (Phoenix).

In addition to the performance appraisal and teaching evaluation, the Performative University has also developed workload documents and policies which detail the number of hours, per year, that academics must undertake duties as directed by their supervisor. The number of working hours at this university is 1725 hours per year or 36.5 hours per week (approximately). However, academics at the Performative University consistently report that they work six days a week and the total hours worked greatly exceeds the official limit. The expanded workload is a quintessential example of Foucault's argument

that the government of conduct presupposes and utilises the liberty of the individual. Academics at the Performative University ‘enjoy’ the freedom of being able to organise their working week without intense regulation. In other words, unlike other workplaces, for example, the public service, academics do not have to sign on and sign off or fill out a timesheet. However, this is a double-edged sword in that this practice of ‘autonomy’ runs up against the performance appraisal process and cultural regime of values and expectations to encourage academics to work well beyond the hours officially recognised for their positions. In the words of one member of staff:

We have academic freedom in a professional sense, in the way we define our time. We don't have to keep a 9 to 5 timesheet. The flipside of that flexibility is that it also encroaches into our private space... you can log in and check your emails on weekends, at night. I do work when my family is asleep and some encroachment of that is because we can do that... you might see that as a positive but ... there's an expectation that we do this. We are loaded up with more and more things with the expectation that we can arrange it by doing it in our free time, so the idea of working 40 hours or 37 or whatever it is – there's none.

Q: Is that explicit, the expectation that you will expand your work week to accommodate your work load?

It's not explicit. There are various tensions going on, how much work you're given and how much work you can manage in the time you're given. The increasing competitiveness, so if you want to progress your career, your capacity to do so means that to be able to be competitive you'll be compared to other academics you have to be able to be doing that kind of work because if you do a 9 to 5 job your capacity to ... mark yourself out as someone who is deserving of promotion, who is a high standing academic is very difficult to do within a short time frame (Sage).

In this regard the technology of flexible work hours in combination with the strengthening of a corporate managerial culture appears to be able to extract higher levels of productivity out of its academics whilst minimising staffing costs. Thus the performance and workload regimes are highly effective ‘waste management’ strategies for the Performative University. Although these regimes complement each other and are working to the same end, they operationalise power in entirely different ways. The performance management regime works through prescription and visibility.

Expectations are explicit and procedures well documented. Academics have to bring their productivity to light by way of the appraisal portfolio and development plan.

In contrast, the university's workload policies have yet to be translated into practice at the school level. Expectations therefore remain implicit, procedures for allocating work are not documented and there is no visibility in terms of the overall allocations of workload within the school. Who gets what and on what basis is obscured in private discussion between the individual academic and the head of school. The lack of transparency or visibility results in the development of all sorts of mythologies and what might be called 'corridor chat' about person x getting a good deal while person y is teaching five subjects. In addition, the lack of visibility helps to obstruct peoples' capacities to raise issues of equity in workload distribution or to actually see the allocation of privilege/disadvantage within the school. In other words, the absence of a uniform public workload model enables academics time to be managed whilst simultaneously foreclosing the possibility for contestation about the details of that distribution. In contrast to the performance management regime it is actually the lack of specificity in the distribution of work loads that enables the exercise of power in terms of increasing work time while suppressing the opportunities for resistance.

Every academic working in the Performative University has experienced work intensification in regards to the amount of academic activity they are engaged in. One academic said they felt 'a little masochistic when you apply for these grants – you go, I'm just adding to my load, I don't know why I am doing it' (Angel, Performative University). One key reason for doing it is because it pays in terms of academic advancement and securing a professional identity that is accorded status and value within the institutional culture. The Performative University encourages its academics to construct a professional identity – an understanding of what it is to be an academic – that is in line with the corporate identity the institution constitutes for itself. To achieve the fit between being the right person and being in the right place, academics within the Performative University are encouraged to construct themselves as research

oriented/active, opportunistic, flexible, customer focussed and pragmatic. Although the above respondent expressed doubt as to why she did it, she also manifested a corporate or entrepreneurial professional identity as is evident in the following quotes:

We're really encouraged to do cross school and cross centre research and form teams, interdisciplinary teams and certainly the sort of work that I do with linkage stuff like someone said ... when it comes to linkage X's like an elite athlete, like I can just go out and do all this stuff and I actually get a lot of institutional respect for the fact.

I'm aware that as I've spoken I've sounded a bit, I think maybe a bit compromised like I sort of accept it and I think maybe I do, maybe I don't but I feel quite comfortable with that. I feel that social work practices and being an academic are compromised worlds and there will inevitably be constraints on our freedom and as long as they have a positive payoff that's good ... so far I haven't found any really significant constraints on my freedom that I could not accept and I see a lot of benefits in the constraints that exist (Angel).

In this regard, although not directly stated, the answer to the question of 'why do it?' is that by it is how this academic achieves status and adjusts his/her academic activity and professional identity to the economy of performance that circulates through the Performative University. As another academic stated 'this university is seductive' and in this regard it creates the conditions in which academics can come to understand themselves as both valued and valuable. Suzy Harris suggests that the discourse of professionalism has been 'colonized' by policy makers and this has encouraged academics to align their identity with their institutions rather than their disciplinary areas or research work³⁰¹. My interviews with academics at the Performance University suggests that the colonization of the discourse of professionalism occurs in the interplay between the policy making activity initiated by the Federal Government and the policy-making generated in individual universities. Overall, the homogenising culture of the Performative University approaches a condition of domination in the extent that it

³⁰¹ S. Harris, 'Rethinking academic identities in neo-liberal times', *Teaching in Higher Education*, 10 (4), 2005, p. 424.

prescribes an overarching pattern of values, norms and practices. As Hugh Willmott argues:

In the Newspeak of corporate culture, autonomy is represented as a gift that can be bestowed by strong culture upon employees that than something that individuals struggle to realize. It assumes that autonomy can be realized within a monoculture that systematically suppresses ideas and practices that might problematize the authority of core corporate values. Through the strengthening of culture, the space within organizations for expressing and developing awareness of, and allegiance to, alternative norms and values is reduced³⁰².

Marginson and Considine identify this tendency in Australia's universities arguing that '... it is now executive management which defines the university. It is increasingly decisive in articulating the purposes of the universities and the character of the academy itself. More and more, it determines the boundaries of what is possible in a university, the outer limits of what can be taught and researched'³⁰³.

The university examined in this chapter demonstrates this regulation of the possible to a much greater degree than any other university examined in this thesis. As previously indicated, this regulation is warranted on the basis of organisational survival or more particularly a fear of a total, yet non-specific 'threat' that has endless potential for deployment in the justification of power relations that are significantly asymmetrical. The effects of these asymmetrical power relations are both affirmed and denied by the middle manager interviewed for this study:

...we're increasingly managing academic staff and academic work. What that means is that we expect certain outcomes in terms of the university and in terms of what the academics actually do and that's not to say that we actually tell them what to do. ... That's not to say but we do increasingly have high expectations in

³⁰² H. Willmott, 'Renewing Strength: Corporate Culture Revisited', in *M@n@gement*, 6(3), 2003, p. 77

³⁰³ Marginson and Considine, 2000, p. 64.

terms of what they do when they're working and what their responsibilities are to their students and in terms of research, of course. So we don't restrict what they research, and I suppose within reason we don't restrict what they say, or who they associate with in terms of community engagement, as long as they are not violating the rights of students, other staff or bringing the university's name into disrepute (Phoenix).

From this perspective, the Performative University should not be viewed as abusing the 'freedom' of its academics because the attempts to govern academic work occurs by way of a regime of expectations involving the construction of what is possible, probably and desirable, rather than by means of prohibitive interference. Indeed it is possible to argue that the traditional understanding of academic freedom as 'freedom from interference' is actually being deployed in the service of asymmetrical power relations. Although the exercise of power within the Performative University does not explicitly tell academics what to think, it still achieves a significant foreclosure of values, leaving little doubt about what is worth thinking about. The construction of an 'alibi' found at work in the belief that academics aren't told what to do or think, only reinforces the existing power relations by normalising them and placing outside the bounds of what constitutes an 'abuse' of power and thus outside the bounds of contestable practice.

Although the Performative University can be treated as mono-cultural in its institutional policies and practices this does not mean that the 'official' discourse that is presented and enacted through the university goes uncontested. Indeed the interviews pointed to academics willing to contest the official discourse. For example, the role of the university was constituted in a number of ways. Ashton says:

I think at the highest level, the university's obligation is to actually be an intellectual and research leader in the community and to use that for improving society. I don't think the main function of a university is as a vocational training institution which is what this government and previous governments are trying to push the university towards that point, but I do think we've got a significant goal in educating and preparing the current and future generations of Australians as citizen and workers. It's contributing to the community, to the national and international community through education and through our research endeavours

and how those then turn into programmes, findings, activities etc that are of benefit to the national and international communities.

I guess what I was thinking about in terms of that was, clearly there is a role and responsibility in terms of education and learning, training – clearly the students who come to the university and training them but I also think there's a broader role, a public role in terms of learning for society and that can mean engaging with society in helping them – the broader society, to understand itself and to understand the world in which we live in, not just through formal education but also through the research that also continually informs that. So, I think that the university has a fairly broad role in society as part of a self reflective way in which society can look at itself or re-look at itself and the world.

Rather than positioning organisational reputation and survival as an end in itself, these members of staff placed value on other ideas and values. These alternative discourses suggest that despite the systematic attempt to engender a corporate identity, a number of academics in the Performative University maintain academic identities that are at odds with the transformations that have defined the higher education landscape ever since the early 1980s.

However, it is difficult for these counter identities and discourse to get any significant purchase in an environment which produces, rewards and sustains such asymmetrical power relations. Resistance takes the form of 'talking back' or ignoring emails or directives that come from higher up the hierarchy. However, these acts of contestation are frequently individual and idiosyncratic in nature. In this regard, they have little effect on the shape of the asymmetrical power relations within the university and the role played by acceptable ideas and values that is currently founding the conditions of academic work within this institution. Indeed, the academic voice has been marginalised throughout the institution with changes in the overall governance structure which have resulted in a system where power has become more concentrated in the executive. Phoenix notes that key governance bodies have become 'less determinative in regards to academic affairs and more advisory in their functions'.

The Performative University manifests a number of key features identifies with 'globalisation' and the impact globalisation has been said to have on the academy. These impacts include a move towards corporatisation or the adoption of what are considered to be good business management models, increased commercialisation in terms of the application of market economics to academic activity and the commodification of knowledge and a more international focus both as a source of income and validation³⁰⁴. Others have pointed to an increased concern for the performance of academics relative to organisational goals³⁰⁵. These shifts give rise to a vocabulary of 'markets', 'productivity' and 'competition'. Nonetheless, the way in which these discourses are adopted, adapted, mediated, contested or complemented by others is peculiar to each university. Thus although the two Sandstone universities included in this study share a 'richness' in terms of history, status and resource base, they have varied markedly in terms of the ethos espoused and the power relations embedded and enacted in relation to this ethos. I shall call this second sandstone the Traditional University.

The Traditional University

The Traditional University shares a number of common features with the Performative University. For example, research is a significant part of the academic activity conducted in this university. It has also implemented a performance management regime and there is a significant committee structure in place providing amongst other things a number of teaching initiatives introduced in the name of quality. However, the culture of the Traditional University is more diverse and the power relations at odds with those that characterise the Performative University. The academics interviewed for this study constructed the Traditional University as a university where the next generation of professionals is developed but also as a place where key public issues can be addressed

³⁰⁴ J. McIntyre & N Solomon, 'The Policy Environment of Work-based Learning: Globalisation, institutions and workplaces' in C. Symes & J. McIntyre (eds) *Working Knowledge: New vocationalism in higher education*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes, UK, 2000.

³⁰⁵ J McIntyre & N Solomon, 2000.

intellectually. In this regard, the role of academics as public scholars is encouraged in terms of it being something that is expected from staff and enabled by the university, for example, by the provision of media training. Unlike the Performative University, the Traditional University constructs community service as engagement with groups and activities that are external to the institution. In this regard the notion of service to the public remains a living idea within the Traditional University:

Q: Since you began your academic career, have you noticed any changes in relation to your freedom?

No ... if I go back to my very first academic job in the late 70's and now, I had absolute freedom in terms of what I researched and how I translated that into community involvement ...

Q: and how has that changed?

I don't think it has changed. There is an expectation of community service here but nobody says what you have to do. No-one says you must work in a soup kitchen or something like that. If I decide I can best make a contribution by being a member of a board of two or three top agencies in their field then fine that's what I do (Kasey).

In the Traditional University the discourse of academics as public scholars is linked to an ethos of elite formation to privilege particular modes of engagement. In this regard, community service commonly takes the form of membership of boards of management particularly for community sector organisations. It can also take the form of membership of committees within the professional association or groups directed towards the professional development of social work practitioners. Being a public scholar translates, in practice, to being a leader in the field.

This link between research and community service reflects the Traditional University's understanding of itself as a prestigious research intensive organisation. However, the prestige of this university is not deployed in an oppressive manner. In this regard there is, for example, no encouragement for social work academics to see themselves as being

lucky to be at the institution. In contrast to the Performative University, the employment practices of the Traditional University suggests a significantly different approach to the issue of employment relations and one that positions the latter as exceptional in its own right:

The university, about five or six years ago, said that it would not have casual staff so anyone who was on a casual contract had to be offered permanent employment. ... So that's the structure of this department. We haven't experienced the casualisation of our workforce and things like that. ... Even if people are on fractional appointments they're fractional continuing. The only way we're able to offer a limited tenure contract, to anybody, is if it's a replacement contract. So if I go off and get seconded somewhere for two years we can offer a two year contract ... That's the only way that anybody can be employed at X university on a non-continuing basis. I think we're a bit unusual in that respect (Kasey).

Rather than being constructed as imperatives to be embraced, the Traditional University challenges some of the prescriptions associated with the discourses of productivity and competition that have been formalised at the Performative University. In particular the Traditional University challenges the 'need' to maintain a 'flexible' work force. However, other counter-discourses are also in evidence. In contrast to the 'shape up or ship out' discourse of the Performative University, one middle manager interviewed at the Traditional university made the following observations:

You have a lot of opportunities to influence and encourage young staff. Encourage them to put up for teaching awards, encourage staff to publish early in their career so they can move on (Ali).

This participant discussed their involvement with a project to identify the possible impact of Federal Government reforms on research assessment:

... we did that paper at the end of last year and now we find the whole university is interested in it. It is quite an interesting advocacy because a lot of it has turned out to be, in these new arrangements, how are early career people going to be protected, how is the young academic going to be grown in a more competitive environment where departments are going to trade star professors and where women who have children take time out of the workforce are going to be

disadvantaged unless there is very specific compensation for the period in which they take time out (Ali).

This represents a different discourse to the one in force in the Performative University regarding academics and their relationship to the university. Rather than being seen as a potential waste of resources and as a problem that needs to be managed, academics at the Traditional University are constructed as an asset to be protected and grown. This contrast manifests itself in the Traditional University's approach to the review of performance. The guide to performance development and review at the Traditional University states that the supervisor and academic must come to an agreement of performance objectives. The discussion focuses on objectives suggests that where possible the personal aspirations of the academic should be considered and that performance expectations must be appropriate to the academic's current level, the stage of their career. The performance review policy also refers to a resilient tradition of collegiality and participation. In this regard, the performance development and review provides encourages academics to provide their supervisor with feedback on issues in the workplace or the supervisors own performance. In contrast to the Performative University, its sandstone counterpart, the Traditional University maintains the practice of rotating the head of school position with occupants having a maximum time period in which they can occupy the role.

Within the Traditional University power operates in a more decentralised way. The major site of contestation is at the Faculty level where resource allocation takes place and where certain hierarchies are constructed and reproduced:

This is a traditional university, traditional in the sense that there are powerful Faculties and there are weaker faculties. Like Medicine obviously is powerful because it earns the biggest research dollars and things like that, the hard sciences – engineering and things like that are not far behind because they earn, they bring big research money in so the university obviously want to protect its big money earners. ...Even within the Faculty of Arts there are larger and smaller departments, there are more powerful and less powerful departments – power in terms of the resources that you demand, the resources you earn and the influence

you have. So a Head of Social Work would never become dean whereas a Head of History, English or Politics would.

Q: What is the basis for that distinction?

Basically size and therefore relative power base within the faculty.

Q: By size do you mean numbers of students?

Yeah numbers of students, budget, size of the staff room and things like that. ... So there's a seniority ranking in a way so that even if you look at professors, not all professors are equal... in a sense we all are technically, have the same appointment and receive the same salary and things like that but in terms of perceived power and influence we differ quite a lot (Kasey).

These hierarchies of influence have a long history. The standing of Medicine and Engineering as 'learned professions' that are at the forefront of the formation of a social elite has always placed these communities of practice high in the institutional pecking order of Australian universities. In this regard, the Traditional University manifests a significant degree of continuity at a time when universities are all too frequently described in epochal times as manifesting changes that make them historically unrecognisable.

The privilege of disciplines like History, Politics and English also reflects continuity in terms of the status accorded to fields of knowledge that are 'self-referential' rather than other-referenced. Although student numbers, budgets and size of staff room are identified by Kasey as the source of power relations, they can also be read as an effect. In this regard, power relations in the Traditional University can be located in an enduring preference for academic disciplines whose *raison d'être* is to describe the world 'objectively', rather than intervene in it or to give expression, as Manent calls it, to a 'spectator' model of knowledge³⁰⁶. The less 'applied' the knowledge, the more pure the discipline and the greater the prestige and authority it can enact. This is not to suggest

³⁰⁶ P. Manent, *The City of Man*, (trans. M. Le Pain), Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1998.

that numbers or size play no role in the exercise of power. Rather, my contention is that this disciplinary mode of differentiation warrant greater allocations in terms of students and resources which, in turn, justify the influence of some disciplines or entities over others.

This existence of a hierarchy of influence is hardly a feature limited only to the Traditional University. Indeed, every university incorporated in this study had some form of academic stratification within Faculties and between them. The impact of this academic stratification was to marginalise some academic voices and interests relative to others. As an academic at the Traditional University stated:

... one of the effects, certainly at X university is a lack of sympathy or a lack of voice of the humanities and social sciences ... that's the main thing so that policies around support for research activities will tend to favour the hard sciences and the medical or health orientated departments (Cameron).

In the Performative University academic stratification is based on intellectual reputation and more importantly, the extent to which schools are able to successfully convert their reputation into research income. This stratification can manifest itself in a foreclosure of opportunities to engage in important academic activities as indicated by an anecdote provided during an interview with an academic from the Performance University:

Q: Is there a hierarchy in your faculty?

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. Psych is definitely on the top. Psych are wonderful. Psych are highly successful, it's a very big school. It's probably the best in the country, its really right up there. It ranks easily internationally. They gets squillions of dollars, just squillions of dollars both in research and in income gained from foreign students. They have study abroad students by the squillions from North America – they're the jewel in the crown. And then we go down from psych, we'd probably go to education which is pretty spectacular too, not quite as spectacular as psych but its pretty spectacular, then you probably track down to social science which is pretty good ... and then us. ... bringing up a very, very sad last is journalism. They're almost sloping their knuckles on the floor and their treated as such too.

Q: How does that pan out?

They're never consulted, you know and at every forum you its pointed out that journalism this and journalism that its, awful. ... they got a new head and not long after he arrived all the heads of school went off to a faculty retreat and they forgot to tell him (Chase).

Although the basis for the exercise of power differs between these two institutions, the practice – the constitution of a hierarchy – is the same. This is not simply the effect of a funding crises or the de-legitimisation of a historically supported role for universities. The academy has always practiced stratification between subjects and thus academic groups. Marjorie Garbner notes the enduring nature of hierarchical differentiation within universities arguing that the mechanism remains constant but the outcome changes, 'The prestige and power of individual disciplines vary over time. New disciplines develop others fade away'³⁰⁷. Some of the key points of distinction in academia have been the hard versus the soft sciences, quantitative versus qualitative research, theory versus practice, professional education versus vocational training. Overall, the exercise of power through the construction of a hierarchy reflects an enduring sameness put into practice with a different face.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I described some of the key ways in which power is exercised within schools of social work located in two Sandstone universities. 'Sandstones' have a long history, enduring positive reputation and very large resource bases when compared to other Australian universities. In this regard, Sandstone universities 'do not need to be fully entrepreneurial. They can dip in and out of money-making ventures to secure incomes and maintain hegemony in emerging areas'³⁰⁸. However, the response to governmental and international discourses of competition and increased productivity has

³⁰⁷ M. Garbner, 'Coveting Your Neighbor's Discipline, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Volume 47, Issue 18, 2000, p. 18.

³⁰⁸ Marginson & Considine, 2000, p. 193.

resulted in different approaches being taken with differing effects in terms of the exercise of power within individual institutions.

My intent in this chapter has been to outline the similarities and differences between the two Sandstone universities examined for this study. One of the Sandstones is particularly authoritarian in that it displayed distinctly asymmetrical power relations, the other was less so. This suggests that the particular culture of a university matters in terms of the way that power is exercised as does the managerial intent of university leaders.

In a later chapter I discuss the effect of these power relations on the exercise of freedom within this institutions and the significance of these relations for political dissent and public scholarship. However, the next chapter is dedicated to exploring the exercise of power within so-called New Universities. As with the Sandstone participants, all interviewees in the New Universities are positioned within schools that teach social work or social welfare related courses.

My experience would be a bit different from most others because when I started there were no policies and we'd have these quick meetings – will we have a policy on this one? We'd leave the policy for six months. There was nothing much in the library except some photocopies that we put in there. We'd started off with nothing so the first few years are not remotely characteristic. We operated in a vacuum – didn't even have an enterprise agreement, we really operated on a shoestring budget and a prayer of good faith. It was really quite amazing actually, a real act of good faith on the part of all parties concerned so that was an unusual experience (Quinn, Bayside University).

Chapter Five: Life in the Enterprise University - The View from the New Universities.

In the previous chapter I explored the power relations at work in two of the most prestigious and resource rich of Australia's Sandstone universities. In this chapter I document the experiences and perspectives of academics working in universities at the other end of the spectrum, the 'New Universities'. The New universities are so-named because they came into existence in the post-Dawkins era. The new universities, with one exception, emerged out of existing Colleges of Advanced Education. These universities, like the universities I call here 'City University', 'Bayside University' and 'Country University' are mostly located in regional areas of Australia, in smaller capital cities or in the outer suburbs of capital cities. Unlike their Sandstone counterparts, New universities lack the advantages of a long history and a secure resource base and many struggle for status in the hierarchy of universities in Australia. They also lack the resource base and economic pulling power of other universities.

Equally, for some new universities their location in rural and regional Australia does have its advantages in that they can mobilise electoral pressure to support growth in funded

places for domestic students³⁰⁹. This electoral politics is well understood within the setting explored as part of this study:

I think regional universities in particular; have in some ways survived against all odds because of some of those political influences. This university spreads through a number of federal seats and the significance of the university to these regional communities ... they've worked out some statistical economic thing that works out for every student that multiplies to the economy and to the community. This has protected a number of universities. Ballarat, Ballarat was so small that it should never have been a university. It's valuable politically and I think that there's no doubt that these influences are there. There has been a benefit in some ways as far as the universities present in these regional areas because if they were using the criteria for the top eight universities we wouldn't survive (Christian, Country University).

This 'politics of location' has been given credence by the Federal Government's regional universities initiatives incorporated in its policy package 'Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future' (2003). This package provided additional funding loadings for students enrolled at regional universities, extra places for nursing students at regional universities and scholarship to assist disadvantaged students from regional and rural areas.

While this 'politics of location' has its advantages, the New universities still struggle in their efforts to both distinguish themselves in the broader higher education sector and to secure a sustainable future. The New universities explored in this study have a much more ambivalent organisational identity and culture. The governmental framework for higher education encourages them to simultaneously embed themselves in the local community *and* respond to the values promulgated by the Federal Government like market attractiveness, international competitiveness, being research active and corporately managed. In this regard, New universities are given mixed messages in that they are constructed as special in terms of being a) significant contributors to the local

³⁰⁹ S. Marginson & M. Considine, *The Enterprise University: Power, Governance and Reinvention in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 202.

economy; b) an important means of upward mobility for disadvantaged and isolated students; c) potential sites for rural and regional development whilst also, simultaneously, having to try and compete with and replicate the activities of other universities and in particular those large, long standing, urban-centric institutions that are held up as being successful in terms of the key markers set by the government.

These tensions and the relative lack of a strong organisational identity and culture were raised in a number of the interviews of staff employed at 'Bayside University'. Indeed, this was voiced by one respondent who stated 'we're punching above our weight' in attempting to emulate the ideal of a university as research intensive, internationally focussed and entrepreneurial (Harley, Bayside):

We're often called into meetings with some visiting guru coming through and he's hauled in – usually a he, perhaps a she – and we have to see where our research might fit in with that person and its ... we get big meetings saying we're terribly concerned about our research profile.

... in our little university we're running around like headless chooks, looking for how to get up research dollars ... we're expected to do incredible amounts of work and I think we're being directly pressured by the kind of change that is going on at the broader level (Harley, Bayside).

The experience at Bayside is not about strengthening of organisational identity and culture in the face of policy change but rather the adoption of a number of organisational identity markers in response to external pressures to realize particular policy objectives. The more heterogeneous nature of new universities' official identity constructions and what this means for academics is evident in the following discussion with a participant at Bayside:

Q: What does it mean to be a good academic? How is that being constructed within your institution?

It's a little bit vague but vague in a way that's not really all that helpful. It's not vague in the sense that that means there is lots of different ways to be a good academic; it's more vague in 'oh gosh I hope I'm doing this ok'. At the moment this university is very concerned, not unreasonably, about the impact of changes particularly whether it's going to end up having any kind of research funding and so forth because we've got the worst track record ...we haven't been going very long and haven't got a lot of infrastructure set up and so the management is starting to work out how to improve our research performance. ... That's entirely fair enough. They're even doing things that I consider is entirely consistent with the way the sector is going. They want to put more emphasis on regional engagement and research. At the same time they want publishing to go into really top-notch journals. How many top-notch journals want to do anything about [the university's location]? I mean, not very many. Even in Australia they're not interested in [this location] and to publish it in an international American journal – yeah sure, they're just dying to hear about us here (laugh). There are those kinds of fundamental contradictions ... what was the question?

Q: What does it take to be a good academic?

We don't know (laugh) and that's the problem, we don't really know how to keep being ok at our jobs. We're getting lots of pressure to be all things that students need. Even the most dedicated of teachers are saying 'I just can't cater to everybody' (Quinn).

The tension between responding to students, the 'bread and butter' of regional universities and developing a research portfolio is intensifying for academics at Bayside. The electoral politics discussed previously minimise the purchase that can be gained by constructing a totalising yet not specific discourse of survival such as that deployed at the Performative University. However, in its place is another threatening discourse which has been provided by the Federal Government. This discourse comes in the form of a suggestion that some universities will become teaching-only institutions in the name of sectorial diversification. This discourse is used to exhort academics to increase their research output in terms of publications and research grants. However, as an academic noted this hasn't translated into a redistribution of resources from teaching to research. Indeed, at Bayside more time is being spent teaching and paying attention to reconfiguring the course profile in the hope of developing and accessing niche markets that attract international and domestic students.

Although academics at new universities like Bayside experience the discourse of teaching-only institutions as providing ‘an opportunity for finger-waving’ (Quinn, Bayside) on the part of management this has not translated into any persistent effort to intensify the management of performance within these institutions. Every new university had an official policy of annual performance review, although one university was in the process of changing its performance management regime. The official policies of these institutions reflected those of the sandstones in regard to the stated intent. For example, the academic performance policy of Countryside states:

The achievement of the Missions and Goals in the University’s Strategic Plan depends on the performance and contribution of staff. Performance ... review aims to ensure alignment between the performance and development of individual staff, work area plans and priorities, and the Strategic Plan and helps to create and maintain an environment that encourages career development and high levels of performance.

Despite the discussion of missions and goals the policies of the new universities lacked the degree of specificity evident in the appraisal regime of Performative University.

Gina Anderson argues that performance management regimes are commonly informal, inconsequential or in some instances, absent entirely:

A variety of responses to performance appraisal emerged in the research interviews for this study. Many academics reported that they went through a very low-key performance appraisal process in a fairly mechanistic fashion. One said ‘I see it as something that has to be done because it’s an expectation of the joint, but it doesn’t add or subtract anything to what I do ...’³¹⁰

Although Anderson’s findings are at odds with the practices at work in the Performative University, they are congruent with the experiences of respondents from these newer

³¹⁰ G. Anderson, *Playing Their Game: An exploration of Academic Resistance in the Managerial University*, Ph.D Thesis, University of Western Sydney, 2005, p. 226.

institutions like Bayside and Countryside. Although Bayside has made performance review a compulsory process for every staff member, this doesn't mean that the policy has actually been implemented. Within this university academics are making their own decisions as to whether or not they will participate:

... it was only introduced about three years ago and it's supposed to be compulsory but it hasn't been enforced ... I'd have to say not many people have done it. ... Our main problem has been if it's a professional development tool and also a tool for catching poor performance it makes it very difficult for people to trust the process and want to do it (Quinn).

At another New university the annual performance review is completed for some staff and not for others. The participant who had not had a performance review was at the senior lecturer level. This participant suggested that her lack of involvement in performance review was because she had been a regular participant in selection processes and thus her performance had been appraised by other means. Even when performance appraisal had been completed at this university and the performance of the academic deemed problematic, this did not necessarily result in any identifiable consequence. The following discussion with a Countryside academic details the implications or otherwise of not getting your performance appraisal signed by your academic supervisor:

They held it up for nine months, then another year. Now I totally ignore all this because I do what I do and I know I do it well and I don't bother about it but it's an exercise in power.

Q: What are the implications if it doesn't get signed off on?

Well I just ignored it because unless they actually activate something, some kind of mechanism – what can they do? I'll wait and see what they do. I'm not going to change; I'm not going to worry about it I'll just go on doing what I do. They're paying my wage, hey; I'll just turn up for my job ...

... other people chase up the head of school try and get it signed because they felt insecure about their position whereas I just don't (laugh) solved the problem – bit crude, crass – but you know what are you going to do? ... It doesn't make for a

great deal of comfort necessarily but as long as the pay's going in every fortnight (Justice, Countryside).

Academics across the all of the New universities expressed concern about performance appraisals and a lack of trust as to how this would be used. The research findings of Gina Anderson and the interviews conducted for this study suggest that mistrust in performance review regimes is pervasive but not universal. For one academic at Bayside annual performance review was a means of protection and a way of accessing support:

I jumped into the [performance review] first off to test my view that if you're canny about it you can use it to protect yourself. I don't believe in protecting you from doing the wrong thing, I mean protect yourself when you're doing the right thing, to be seen to be doing the right thing, that's what I mean by protecting yourself. I do it and I think it protects me and I've negotiated what my plans will be for the next twelve months. My advisor helps make sure I don't assume I can do too much makes sure that I do have quite reasonable kinds of plans, that they do fit university's objectives. It gets signed by both of us, now if I've pretty much carried that out, I haven't done anything wrong. ... If your advisor has got it wrong, well its not my problem. I, in good faith, negotiated this with them or consulted with them and you can note down the kinds of resources you want. I figure as long as you've got a good advisor and you use this productively, I think it can be a really important tool. So if you end up in trouble you've got a track record of what you've been doing, that what you've been doing has been approved of and all that kind of stuff (Quinn, Bayside).

However, a number of participants across the three New universities involved in this study voiced a lack of trust in the performance regime and how it might be used:

... our university spent a lot of money on a new system... Now the vice chancellor has engaged consultants to come up with a new system. One of the important issues is the role of the union. Last time they had an influence towards a more developmental and less managerialist punitive system. I think the union is likely to have less traction this time because of the changed environment (Reagan, Cityside).

Indeed, even the participant who was positive about performance reviews suggested that the concerns of staff were not without foundation. This suggestion is implicit in their concern to protect themselves and in their discussion of how the policy and practice of performance review was developed at their university:

The [performance review] has been fairly loose in terms of what it specifically requires you to do which means that what you read into it is the strategic goals. It's got to relate to the strategic goals and that kind of thing and if you want to justify anything you've got to keep writing it up in your strategic goals. If your strategic goals are ok its not so bad but if you think the strategic goals are too limited then that's a problem and I must say I have a lot of concerns about the shape of what strategic goals and mission statements are going to be as time goes by particularly as universities as public institutions are more as a tool for economic development, which I see as a useful thing, but its almost exclusively that.

We managed to negotiate a policy that wasn't as strict on the authoritarian side of it. ... We negotiated something that's not too bad. It started off having heavily punitive stuff in it and you're thinking well that's really going to be encouraging people to pour their heart out and say I need some professional development with all this work you'll be forced ... but we had a lot of that stuff taken out.

... instead of assuming you're going to do your job well... it's assuming that we're going to fail, so you'd better be aware of what's going to happen if you do and we've managed to get policies that have a lot of that sting taken out, not the mechanisms – we haven't got a problem with the mechanisms – we've had the wording of the really punitive stuff taken out of it but the fact that management is always putting it to us, saying, here's the policy and here's all the punitive stuff if you blow it.

I keep saying if you pick the right person and do it well, it protects you, it won't work against you, it will protect you. But I've got to say, I've already seen examples of people for whom it hasn't protected [because] it has been used inappropriately and as a tool it's caused harm. Whether it was an evil being or someone who just didn't read it to understand how the process is supposed to work, I don't know (Quinn, Bayside).

Performance review is often treated within management literature as adding greater rationality to employment relations. However, in the experience of this academic it has the potential to produce arbitrary effects depending on whether you have picked the

right person as your advisor, whether they understand the process and whether or not they are 'evil'. In terms of the lack of specificity in the performance management process, this can be read as an opportunity for the exercise of freedom on behalf of academics. However, when it is placed in the context of a history of punitive intent, and a requirement to link activity to strategic goals, the prospects for freedom and how it is actualised are clearly being shaped by power. However, this power lacks visibility because the process appears to be based on consent and the willing engagement of the academic.

Despite the misgivings associated with performance and appraisal processes, the exercise of power in 'new' universities is more pervasive in helping to shape the prospects for career advancement rather than affecting the prospects of ongoing employment as was the case at the Performative University. In this regard, the absence of a signed performance appraisal discussed in the above example is not entirely without consequence in that performance reports play a part in the promotion processes of Countryside University. This is in accordance with organisational policy which states that signed performance reviews must be provided with any application for promotion. Indeed, it is in the promotions process that academics from 'new' universities have to 'confess' to their actions and provide a worthy account of themselves:

We've reached a point of over-documentation so applying for promotion within the university is probably ten times more onerous than applying for a job at another university. So to apply for a promotion takes a major slice of your time (Reagan, Cityside).

The location of surveillance and 'confessional' techniques within promotions policies and procedures is a voluntary practice. It requires academics from the 'new' universities to engage in a process of critical reflection as to what they value and the extent to which they are prepared to 'play the game' within the university. This was made evident in an interview with a participant from a Bayside University:

... a choice I am making more and more is I'm never going to be a vice chancellor ... it's almost better if I stay at the top of my current level because no-one's going to take me down steps. I'm not having to please people to keep running up points for a promotion and it's so difficult to get promotion in the university anyway but I've started thinking look I am about as old as some of these people who are now our administrators and I'm not going to be cowered. I'm going to say what I think (Hunter, Bayside).

For Hunter, making a choice not to apply for promotion is an act of resistance in its own right and a means for further resistance in terms of speaking out about university practice and the direction the university is taking. Hunter gave the following example of resistance:

... the other day ... there was an issue come up about homelessness on the campus and I thought, look, if someone's actually hurt on campus from being homeless and they're sleeping under a bench somewhere and they get attacked or something the university is going to look really stupid so I really pushed the fact that we have to take responsibility. We have to get together a list of houses where people can be accommodated overnight if that arises and a few people on the other side of the table had these smiles, you know, the patronising type smiles and I thought you idiots you are going to look really stupid. So I myself am fuming. I'm going to say what I think needs to be said rather than just jumping to yet another Brendan Nelson edict. I mean it's ridiculous.

Interestingly, this participant was resisting either a particular policy position (or lack of one) and a more generic the perception that the university was jumping to the Federal Ministers tune, by deploying an argument that is often used by corporate managers within universities. Hunter's strategy was to appeal to concerns about how the university would look, and what the occurrence of an attack on a homeless person would do for the university's reputation. In this regard, Hunter is unwittingly both challenging *and* reproducing the dominant discourses that currently circulate through the higher education sector.

One of the dominant policy themes that have transformed Australian higher education is about productivity and the drive to intensify the work output of academic staff. Like

their Sandstone counterparts, all of the New universities had a workload formula that was used to assign and monitor the productivity of employees. However, the management of academic workloads is a notoriously difficult issue for universities to address. For some academics the very notion of a workload policy is treated as an affront to idea of professionalism³¹¹. This view was not represented in the interviews conducted for this study. Each of the New universities explored in this project had some form of workload document or were working towards the development of one. The development of workload policies in universities is often the result of enterprise bargaining negotiations. One academic at a New university noted that it had take one and a half years to have a workload clause put into the university's enterprise bargaining agreement and that at the time of the interview an operational workload formula had still not been achieved or implemented. However, the need for a workload policy within this institution was suggested by the comment that expectations about face to face teaching time varied markedly within the organisation with some academics expected to do eight hours a week whilst others were expected to do twelve hours face to face teaching per week.

Here I turn my attention to the experience of academics at Countryside, the university which, out of the three 'new' institutions, has the most detailed, operational workload policy. Like the other universities, this institutions policy had its genesis in an enterprise agreement. The workload policy examined here was developed at the Divisional level and as such covers several hundred academics across a number of schools.

The policy assumes that academics have a responsibility to contribute to three areas teaching; research and scholarship; and consulting, community service and service to the university. As at the Performative University, this 'new' institution calculates workloads on a yearly basis. Soliman contends that the desire for flexibility warrants this preference

³¹¹ I. Soliman, *The Academic Workload Problematic*, HERDSA Annual International Conference, Melbourne, 12-15 July, 1999.

for an annual formula rather than one that articulates a per week workload allocation³¹². Soliman also notes that the calculation of a maximum number of required work hours – 1725 per year – is set in accordance with the current benchmark for the public service³¹³. In this regard, workload policies implicitly reproduce the discourse of academics as employees and thus represent a form of de-professionalisation.

Importantly, the workload policy at Countryside states that academic staff should not be required to *account* for more than 1725 hours of work per year. In this regard the number of hours actually worked may vary markedly from those accounted for if they choose to take on additional work in the hope of bettering their work prospects or if they are requested to take on additional tasks that are not written into the work agreement that has been set at the beginning of the year.

Despite the translation of bureaucratic benchmarks into the academic workload policy, the mutual desire for a degree of variability – constructed as flexibility on the part of managers and autonomy by academics – is reflected in Countryside's workload policy. Bayside stipulates a percentage for each academic activity. For example, research can account for between 0 and 35% of an academics annual workload. This is described as a 'rule of thumb' model. Every academic is assumed to use 225 hours or 13% of workload time undertaking 'normal scholarly activity' in order to remain abreast of developments in one's field, read journals, participate in seminars, conferences, professional development activity etc.

The research specific workload allocation is claimable on the basis of what staff members are proposing to undertake and their track record in research. For example, 'staff who have a recent established research record of one or more conference papers in refereed conference proceedings and are proposing to do the same or more in the next year' can

³¹² Soliman, 1999.

³¹³ Soliman, 1999.

claim 240 hours towards their yearly workload requirements. The research component of the policy has a six tier system which allows for up to 600 hours of research time to be claimed on the basis of a proven track record in research and what the academic proposes to do research wise in the given year.

Soliman notes that workload negotiations generally revolve around two 'legitimate but not necessarily compatible'³¹⁴ values – equity and financial viability. In this 'new' university workload negotiations occurred on a one-on-one basis with an administrator, not an academic as was the case in all other universities I examined. Although this represents an exceptional practice, some continuities were also present. Most notable, there was a lack of visibility in terms of the outcome of negotiations. In this regard academics were left in the dark as to what balance, if any, had been struck between equity and financial viability.

Once again the capacity for academics to challenge the decision-making of the workload administrator was significantly negated by the lack of transparency. Variations between what academics had been allowed to claim and the overall workloads of staff within the division remained hidden. This lack of transparency runs counter to what is considered to be good practice³¹⁵. It is also contrary to the official statements within the divisional workload policy itself and Countryside University's own enterprise bargaining agreement. As with other universities the question of favouritism was raised by academics within this university. Soliman's account of a workload consultation she was involved with suggests that these concerns are widespread. The following response was provided during that consultation:

I feel that there are a number of privileged academics who need only spend a few hours a week devoted to their teaching and gain all the accolades that the extra time brings (promotion, prestige, recognition etc.) because they are able to

³¹⁴ Soliman, 1999, p. 7.

³¹⁵ Soliman, 1999.

concentrate on research and scholarship extensively, while the drones like me are spending nearly all week on teaching ... and can't churn out one article per semester unless we work all the hours god sends³¹⁶.

It is important to note that the workload model of Countryside University (described above) has the potential to do more than just reproduce a hierarchy of privilege and a differentiation of power in terms of workload claims. Given the emphasis on research output, this policy compounds these effects in that workload concessions in one year enables the expansion of an academics' research record which can then be used to warrant more workload concessions in the next year. In this regard, the cumulative effects of relative privilege/disadvantage in workload negotiations can become very significant over time.

Discontent about workload policies and their lack of transparency is perhaps more of an issue because of the intensification of work that has occurred in most, if not all, universities. The argument that workloads have increased for academics is supported by statistics on the student-teacher ratio which shows an increase from 14.2 in 1993 to 20.7 in 2004³¹⁷. Coaldrake and Stedman suggest that the numbers only tell part of the story:

As student numbers increased, institutions were faced with an increasing diversity in student population, both in academic preparation and in terms of language, socio-economic background and other factors. Students can no longer be assumed to be sufficiently gifted to learn for themselves in the face of indifferent teaching³¹⁸.

³¹⁶ Soliman, 1999, p. 6.

³¹⁷ Australian Vice Chancellors Committee, *Student to Teacher Ratio – 2005*
<http://www.avcc.edu.au/http://www.avcc.edu.au/documents/publications/stats/SSR-2004.pdf>,
Viewed 13 February 2006. Note these figures include all students. The student to teacher ratio for onshore students for the year 2004 was 19.4.

³¹⁸ P. Coaldrake & L. Stedman 'Academic Work in the Twenty-first Century: changing roles and policies', *Higher Education Division, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs*, 1999, p. 3,
http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/publications_resources/profiles/archives/academic_work_in_the_twenty_first_century.htm, viewed 10 February 2006.

Workload intensification has been linked to an increase in administration and accountability. Coaldrake and Stedman refer to a study by McInnis to highlight these issues:

... a majority of the sample believed that their administrative load had actually increased substantially in recent years. The category of administrative work which apparently caused the greatest dissatisfaction was that relating to external demands for accountability and quality assurance³¹⁹.

Indeed, this is an issue that many interviewees raised in regard to the current barriers to the exercise of freedom within their university. The cumulative effect of these changes and the dissatisfaction they cause is well articulated by an academic from at Cityside University:

... we've got a more diverse student population which is fantastic. I can't imagine why anyone would argue against that but ... that actually creates more workload because you're dealing with diversity. Who is actually going to resource it and of course everyone except the academics want the academics to do it. At the moment we have this huge range of tasks and in fact a lot of us like me are pushing back saying I absolutely want this to be resourced – I ain't doing it! Get a pot of gold from somewhere else, you don't take it out of my hide because we need to be taking individual account of just about every student who has some kind of special circumstances. I want them here studying, absolutely I do, but the whole system is going to be geared to mass education. There's always been some flexibility when dealing with individual students because there's something special they need or something that's different. I want the diversity to be recognised and respected and that sort of stuff but it increases the workload in all this paperwork trail but you've got to keep your back covered all the time because you never know – the legal reasons, that's just one little thing. There's just so much reporting, there's all this reporting we seem to be doing all the time (Reagan).

³¹⁹ P. Coaldrake & L. Stedman 'Academic Work in the Twenty-first Century: changing roles and policies', *Higher Education Division, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs*, 1999, p. 7, http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/publications_resources/profiles/archives/academic_work_in_the_twenty_first_century.htm, viewed 10 February 2006.

Concerns about the repercussions of negative student feedback or complaints are contributing to and reproducing what is not overly dramatic to call a 'climate of fear' in regard to academic-student relations. This draws on the discourse of student as customer and the consequent shift from a perspective of student rights to one based upon the primacy of student needs and interests:

... we now believe that we have more reason to be fearful about student complaints and therefore – I don't want to go back to the bad old days where students were, so I heard, treated like crap and their opinions weren't worth anything – but I think we need to find a balance between student rights and academic judgment. I think that is a very difficult balance to get. It's almost that your academic judgement is playing second fiddle to, not even student rights but what the students want and say they want. ... There is less confidence that staff will be backed up when students are critical of them. Now I don't think that staff should be backed against any complaint whatsoever – it's important that that's understood – but there is concerns that complaints that you just weren't prepared to go the extra distance can work against you. I was talking with someone here today where a student had acted badly the whole semester, gotten themselves into a real mess and now was threatening this person unless they did certain kinds of things for their assessment.... Where you can trust your dean to be a sensible person, that's fine – where you can't trust your dean ... that's a really scary situation these days (Quinn, Bayside)

Quite clearly, this academic is not making a call for a return to some 'golden age' without any oversight or safeguards for students. However, academics are concerned about the capacity of academic leaders to appropriately contextualise complaints. There is a concern that the 'student as customer' discourse is now accompanied by the idea that 'the customer is always right'. This concern is heightened by the increase in the number of full-fee paying students. One academic acknowledged the change in student-academic relations but understood this in terms of the ethical dilemmas that it presents. The following comment was made in regard to full-fee paying students:

...we're being reminded that our study abroad students ... bring in an enormous amount of money so we're under pressure at the end of the year when they are in tears in our office because they haven't passed. What are you supposed to do? Say

we'll let you pass because no one will know back there that you didn't do that well. It creates dilemmas of that sort (Jessie, Bayside).

Respondents in Gina Anderson's study confirm this experience³²⁰. One of Anderson's interviewees relating a story of a colleague who received a resubmitted assignment that had, stapled to the front, the receipt for fees paid.

The level of fear/ethical angst and the extent to which this is exacerbated or diminished by the actions of academic managers within each university may vary markedly. However, it is reasonable to argue that conflict between academic judgement and student wants has become an issue across the sector. The potential over this issue is inherent in a range of incongruent practices that now mark out contemporary higher education. There is, for example, disparity between talk about 'teaching excellence' at a time when student-teacher ratios have increased and institutional rewards have become even more heavily geared towards research. The potential for hypocrisy is increased when 'quality' and 'innovation' are valorised even as academics experience an absence of basic support for their teaching work. Such an experience was raised by one academic at Bayside where there is only one audio-visual technician to service a large number of active teaching spaces. In terms of impact, such an arrangement means that a blown light bulb can sabotage efforts to provide a rigorous educational experience for students. Indeed, the experience of a blown light bulb and the frustration of having this undo a well-structured lesson plan led this academic to throw stones at the vice-chancellors office. 'Luckily', s/he says, 'he wasn't in' (Hunter, Bayside).

Hunter also expressed frustration at the standardisation of course outlines and the implementation of a scheme of graduate attributes. These issues were raised and criticised by academics from each of the new universities. Indeed, from the perspective of these academics, these two initiatives were clear evidence of a decline in academic

³²⁰ Anderson, 2005.

freedom. Academics criticised the intent and content of both of these initiatives as is clear by some responses:

We've had our course outline taken from our control - here's the pro-forma, it's in this order, exactly in this order, exactly this way - so that any ideas that you may relate the content of your curriculum to how you set out your programme and talk about it and the assessment, well no. No, and it's laid out so that students learn all about their assessment even before they know the lecture topics and I have to take great exception to that as many of us do (Justice, Countryside).

... you've got the front cover, you turn over the page and the first thing we have to do is, the first box you tick is 'this course involves working experience in industry'. Out of all the things, the first thing you are asked to explain to students about your course is whether there is industry experience or not. That's the very first thing. You think, well was that random, I'll just pick any one to be first - I don't think so. ... If you can't tick that box tick this one. A message is being sent here, not just to students, it's sent to us. I think having work experience is wonderful but not in every single course. It shouldn't be something that were thinking 'oh gosh maybe if I did it I could position myself better and keep my job (Reagan, Cityside).

There's not the flexibility to teach. Students have different needs, different cohorts have different needs that have to be met. We can't respond to that because we are somehow under the tyranny of these course outlines. All that tends to be enforced by administrative people who actually haven't worked much at universities before. So that's an example of this loss of freedom, to think, well actually my students need to know a lot more about this (Jessie, Bayside).

London, another academic at Cityside University described course outlines as 'railroad tracks' that largely determine where you are going with your teaching and how you are going to get there. These academics are not claiming that there should be no oversight on teaching. What frustrates them is the way certain values are being privileged through course outlines and the resulting standardisation that comes with them. From the perspective of academics interviewed here, the standardisation of course outlines - reinforced by a regularly repeated discourse of legal risks - diminishes a teacher's capacities to respond to the needs of students as they become evident throughout the semester. In effect, risk aversion on the part of institutions threatens responsiveness at a

time when this is given great privilege in the talk about flexibility, student centred curriculum and student needs that circulate through universities in the contemporary era. In other words, the experiences and perspectives of these academics suggest that policy driven attempts to improve academic practice are selectively deployed and are at times are deeply contradictory and even hypocritical.

At Bayside, course outlines have implications for the availability of scholarly resources. One academic, Hunter, stated that the course outlines have to be lodged with the library and that they use them to manage the process of resources acquisition. In this regard, 'It's a bit difficult to get resources for teaching if you haven't named them in your course outline'. Thus, course outlines are a mechanism of power in that they frame what is allowable in terms of scholarly resources. However, as Foucault's work highlights, this technology of power also enables act of resistance:

Of course we've all got into putting extra stuff in our course outlines. Last year X needed a piece of Heidegger so I put it in my recommended reading although Heidegger didn't directly have a lot to do with what I was going to be teaching X stated 'I've been asking for this book for some time now at the library' (Hunter, Bayside).

In addition to the limitations of course outlines academics at new universities, like their Sandstone colleagues, express discontent with the introduction of graduate attributes. For some, this is a meaningless exercise and the time spent on them is treated as time taken away from other more important activities. However, one academic expressed a significant dissonance of values in terms of some of the graduate attributes that are valorised at Bayside and with the extent to which this initiative has actually resulted in a rigorous engagement with the question of what it means to educate students:

We had some quite interesting discussions but it didn't matter what was said because at the end of the day it was all reduced to dot points and those dot points are our university's graduate attributes. ... Down the track we're all told we all have to completely re-jig our course outlines according to the standard format with the graduate attributes, the chart, the grid of graduate attributes and in what

ways it met it and one of the things it had was, for example, to value reason. I think from a social science perspective, the idea of unthinkingly valuing reason is truly ridiculous. The area I teach in we've seen the most awful things done in the name of reason in science – testing aboriginal people for example ... in ways that completely deny their human rights and all that stuff. Those policies of assimilation and everything were all done in the name of reason. Science was used to justify those things and I don't think we should be saying people have to value reason. I mean obviously reason can be valuable in some situations but the idea that it should be a blanket out there is really. First of all, I would want people to critically understand how reason is used as an ideology or a process of whatever but the idea that you value reason, I mean.

I felt that it was the most awful thing we had to do. It was like reducing complex thinking to dot points and even that fellow, Keating's speech writer, Don Watson, ... he reckons that dot point thinking or power point is cognitively impairing and that's so accurate because we had to reduce complex things about our courses to these grids (Hunter, Bayside).

Kate Chanock lends support to the concerns of these academics³²¹. Chanock argues that the push for graduate attributes stems from external pressures for accountability and the perception that a system of designated graduate attributes will make students more employable. From Chanock's perspective, this perception has fuelled the momentum to designate graduate attributes. Universities view the integration of graduate attributes as yet another way in which they can gain competitive advantage in relation to attracting students and a positive assessment of their employment prospects after graduation. Chanock argues that graduate attributes have often been implemented in a top down way that has often resulted in the development of a list of attributes that cannot be taught, observed or assessed in universities and ones that more properly belong in on-the-job training schemes or workplace induction processes.

Chanock gives a number of examples of problematic graduate attributes. For example, one from the website of Sydney University states 'the ability to plan and achieve in both

³²¹ K. Chanock, 'Challenges to the Graduate Attributes Movement' in K. Dellar-Evans & P. Zeegars (Eds.) *Language and Academic Skills in Higher Education*, Vol. 6, 2004, pp. 3-21. All of the discussion in this section is taken from this journal article.

the personal and professional sphere'³²². Chanock argues that 'an institution that adopts these sorts of attributes is saddling itself with the task of ensuring that they are developed in every student in every degree *and assessed before graduation*'³²³. Chanock's arguments lend support to the standpoint of academics who contend that some graduate attributes are meaningless and that time spent trying to articulate them into a course of study may be a waste of time or energy.

Chanock also argues that some attributes are incompatible with the intellectual culture and values of academics, particularly in the arts, social sciences and humanities where students engage in academic programs that aim to do more than develop skills for workforce participation. In this regard, Chanock suggests that graduate attributes developed with a purely employment focus in mind may be incompatible with the cultures of academic study within these areas. In this regard, Chanock contends:

... even where the language of the attributes favoured by employers seems to match the language used in Arts degrees, the meaning behind the words may be quite different. For example, when we read on the Gradlink website (an online careers resource that employers want graduates with the skill of political awareness, we find that this is defined as understanding the hidden tensions and power struggles within organizations. Aware [ness] of the location of power and influence within organizations (i.e. who is the real boss who actually makes the decisions which affect the workplace, employees and customers). This is unlikely to be what a teacher or a student of international relations, for example, first thinks of in connection with the phrase. We probably need to ask, as well, what is meant in each different context by -other common themes like critical thinking or self-management³²⁴.

Concern about the standardisation of teaching practices and curriculum design is a common feature across the three university types I examined. The different universities in this study also share a concern with the decline of the academic voice within governance

³²² Chanock, 2004, p.15

³²³ Chanock, 2004, p. 17.

³²⁴ Chanock, 2004, p. 18.

boards and committees. An academic from Cityside expressed this concern in the following way:

You look at committees and they've got hardly any academics on them and they've got representatives from all the rest of the university – unbelievable! I can see it's a coordination effort, that kind of might make sense but it makes the academic voice just one of the many when it might be quite an academic-type issue or when academic issues emerge out of a particular committee, the academic is only one voice – it can be outvoted or ignored by these people who don't really know the academic side of it and of course, when an academic says that we actually bring the money in you know, it's up to us – particularly with students here – we have to do our teaching as well as we can – we need bums on seats and so what we want and need has to be seen as something to pay attention to, ... not necessarily having exactly what we want but, it has to be important but no, this is dismissed as just one of a whole range of competing concerns and we, it's our little rumps bringing the money in (Reagan).

In this case, there are two mechanisms at work which exclude the academic voice. The first relates to who is defined as being worthy to listen to. The second relates to the construction of the problem and what gets privileged in situations where competing concerns are voiced. These mechanisms of power are not unrelated. The position of being privileged as a speaker can enable a particular construction of a problem to supplant other alternatives. Alternatively, when a particular construction of a problem – with its attendant concerns – gains ascendancy in the discourse then those 'in the know' about these things are able to claim privilege in terms of speaking to the issue.

In the experience of academics employed in New universities, committee membership may give the right to attend meetings but it carries no guarantee of being heard. The academic voice can, and is, being marginalised within governance forums by exercises of power that marginalise their claims to knowledge and consequently the level of influence they can achieve. In effect, contemporary universities separate managerial/administrative authority out from intellectual authority with the former being given greater organisational weight. However, claims to knowledge are not the only practices of exclusion that are marginalizing academics from the governing activity that occurs

within the everyday life of universities. The experience of one respondent from Countryside suggests that geographical location can impact on the power relations between members of decision-making groups:

I do find it difficult being here when a lot of the decisions and discussion goes on there and the kinds of issues that get to academic board, there's already a background to them, there's obviously already been a lot of discussion. It feels to me down here like I'm walking into a meeting where a lot of the issues there has already been lots of conversations about them that I'm just not part of. ... it's very difficult to actually enter into the debate. I don't really get a chance to get that communication flow and to engage with the ideas and issues. It's frustrating but I don't think I'm the only one it's frustrating for (Justice, Countryside).

Beyond the issue of the everyday governance arrangements, concerns were also expressed in relation to the perceived lack of consultation when senior managers are contemplating significant changes. Academics at the New universities expressed anxiety and some anger over the differentially structured hierarchy of consultation in which some groups have more influence or get to participate more actively than others. The way in which a number of universities had managed the consultation process in relation to major initiatives such as the restructuring of university's internal organisation was the most frequently the genesis of these concerns.

John Hogan's exploration of changes in academic structures within the United Kingdom suggests that the urge to re-form universities is very common³²⁵. Hogan used the Commonwealth University Yearbook to map changes to the internal academic structures of eighty-one universities. Within the selected group 74% had undergone at least one significant reorganisation between 1994 and 2003³²⁶. A number of universities had undergone more than one major restructure during this period. Hogan argues that academic restructures are driven:

³²⁵ J. Hogan, 'Should form follow function? Changing academic structures in UK universities', *Perspectives*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2005.

³²⁶ Hogan, 2005, pp. 51-52.

... as much by fashion or received ideas from industry or the public sector. It is rare for organisational change to be driven by educational ideas. Organisational change can be driven by perceived lack of success, a reaction against previous organisational changes ..., concerns about communication and the desire to increase the responsiveness of the academic structures to management needs³²⁷.

Hogan identified the arrival of a new vice chancellor as a key motivator for change alongside the desire of executive management to create competitive advantage by strategically managing the internal distribution of resources. Reforming the university is almost irresistible for any new vice chancellor because it is a key way that they can differentiate their period of reign from that of their predecessors. Organisational restructures enable vice chancellors to demonstrate their credentials as change agents and for ambitious vice chancellors, these credentials are important to their longer-term career aspirations.

A number of participants reported that their university was in the middle of, or had recently completed, an organizational restructuring exercise:

I'd say we're about half way through a change process, so that faculties have been restructured from four to three and the faculty administrative staff within each faculty is now standardised and all positions filled (Reagan, Cityside).

This interviewee had initially viewed this change process in a positive light. The reform agenda of her university's new Vice Chancellor fuelled hope that the administrative systems would become more transparent and effective in terms of enabling academics to get on with their scholarly activities. However, as time went on hope was replaced by 'a growing disillusionment with the process'. This disillusionment stems from a number of sources. One problem was the perceived lack of influence that academics had in terms of their ability to shape the outcomes of the reform process:

³²⁷ Hogan, 2005, pp. 51-52.

At the moment seems as though the influence that we can have is fairly tokenistic. ...There's supposed to be consultation processes but it's that typical sort of token thing where people are asked something and then given a week to respond or something comes out and people object to it and their objections are noted and the administration goes ahead with it anyway.

I think a lot of us put an amazing amount of faith in the union (Reagan, Cityside).

This last comment is reflected in the viewpoints of respondents from across the three university types explored in this study. However, it is important to understand that the academic union's role in broader issues that impact on the conditions of academic work is contentious in its own right. As an academic from Bayside said:

There is a major tension between the union and the university administration and it tends to be played out by the union saying look we have things to say about the university environment and what its like and that's about the political environment not necessarily the physical environment. The university is saying you're the union you should be negotiating the industrial conditions for your members and you should stay out of governance issues.

... The university has said to the union 'this isn't your job, you shouldn't be speaking about this'. But, of course, those of us who feel as though one voice cant have much influence we hope and tell the union yes we do want you to be quite vocal about these matters and to put the pressure on. ... When the university refuses to recognise their legitimacy in relation to these concerns I think it's quite difficult. They can't really make them part of the enterprise bargaining negotiations. So they can speak but their legitimate voice is, there is an attempt to negate it (Quinn, Bayside).

From this respondent's perspective the decline in the influence of the academic voice within the university is accompanied by a decline in the privilege given to the academic activities of teaching, research and service. In this regard, academics often treat the rise of the non-academic functions as a problem:

In the restructure what these people who made the decisions have done is to increase the management positions and decrease what you might call frontline positions. ... people understand and appreciate the work that they do themselves.

...you get the problem then that they understand the work in administrative terms and they see the real work as the bureaucratic work rather than service delivery and when I say delivery in an academic sense I mean teaching and research. So you've got administrators who don't do any of that work who understand and value their own work and probably think that that's what keep the university going and so then when they are making decisions about restructure you get a proliferation of positions like theirs – positions that are management and so what that's done because we are in an environment of at best static and at worst shrinking resources, there can be no expansion in the number of positions and so it seems to me that in the faculty restructure they are actually taking positions away from service delivery into management. So we're going to have more managers managing fewer people doing the actual work. That's a very nasty direction that things are going in. ... we'll go from having a dean and a deputy dean to having a dean, a deputy dean and three associate deans (Reagan, Cityside).

Marginson and Considine have suggested that organisational restructuring has become a widespread phenomenon in recent years with universities ceasing to be discipline based entities³²⁸. In many instances the discipline-based model has been replaced by 'cross disciplinary schools and research centres in which identities and resources are amenable to a high degree of selection and restructuring from above'³²⁹. Marginson and Considine's believe these attempts to reconfigure the internal structures of universities stem from concerns that disciplines, and the collegial cultures that sustain them, are obstacles to the implementation of change and the free movement of resources.

Restructures of the internal working of academic units are often viewed as enabling the shift of power from academic staff to administrators and management. While this analysis grasps something of the changing nature of power relations within universities it also conceals other power effects that are set loose by internal reorganisation and reproduced within these processes. In effect, the restructuring of academic collectives, whether they be faculties, departments, divisions, portfolios or schools, is typically the outcome of already existing hierarchies of power and the ground on which structure is

³²⁸ Marginson & Considine, 2000.

³²⁹ Marginson and Considine, 2000, p. 10.

formed. This is evident in the reflections of a senior staff member from Countryside. The academic work unit this person is based in has been subject to restructuring twice in the last two and a half years. Both of these changes were initiated by a vice chancellor – one was a ‘parting gift’ from a vice chancellor who was moving on, the other a ‘welcoming present’ from the new incumbent.

The first reorganisation saw this respondent’s school amalgamated with another to form a new larger school of social science which was located within the Division of Business. From this participants perspective it was quite clear where the power lies within the Division:

There’s no doubt, no doubt that anything business and economic that can be flogged overseas has power. To give an example, take the Tourism programme. Our school ... is going to be split up and we were not considered, although we have over five hundred EFTSU we weren’t seen to be of a size that could stand alone. Tourism’s much less than that. Tourism’s untouchable, absolutely untouchable because it’s sexy and they teach it overseas. Resource sciences too, they’re untouchable because of their research grants ... and quite rightly so.

Since we’ve been in the division of Business our part... ours stuff has all gone down We don’t even rate on the Richter Scale – they do not understand what we are talking about (Christian, Countryside).

This last comment makes visible the culture clash between business oriented parts of the division and the much smaller community service program. This clash is significant in terms of the access to resources that support academic work and the capacity of academics to go on with work they thought met important community needs. This was evident when I asked, ‘what does it mean when you don’t rate on the Richter Scale’?

The implications are that you don’t get the student intakes that you would like. You’ve got to fight to get things like internal research grants. A couple of people in our area didn’t get it because it didn’t meet the division’s priorities but no-one could tell them what the divisions’ priorities were! Other people managed to get them, but we didn’t. It just makes people frustrated, feel devalued and for me it’s

that you have to fight for stuff and I am really weary of having to fight and justify stuff.

This participant argues that these difficulties are the result of the two factors. One was the privilege given to some schools and the other reflected the effects of gender relations within the university. Christian (Countryside) argues:

Our part of the social sciences is seen as the softer, touchy-feely, feminine sort of stuff that's not in sync with the dominant masculine, business, management stuff.

They'd deny it ... they'd go no, no absolutely not but I think it plays out in promotions. ... Its played out in terms of influence and who dictates the divisions agenda.

The social sciences have been marginalised and I really think it would have been different if there'd been a male head and one of the boys club. I think [head of school] has done a sterling job even to survive in there ... I don't think I'd have survived. I probably would have said something I shouldn't have.

The capacity of individuals to influence the agenda within the division was predicated, not only on whom they were but also how they operated. Some of the 'boys', this respondent suggested, relied on a bullying style of self-promotion or negotiation. Anderson argues that this 'macho' management style has become more prominent as the public sector has set out to emulate behaviour that it associates with the private sector and the competitive market³³⁰. Anderson draws on the work of Kerfoot and Whitehead who argued that management in further education had always been dominated by men. However, the discourse of competition and the Darwinian ethos of 'survival of the fittest' had given permission to an increase in oppressive practices and aggressive behaviours within universities³³¹.

³³⁰ G. Anderson, *Playing Their Game: An Exploration of Academic Resistance in the Managerial University*, Ph.D Thesis, University of Western Sydney, 2005, p. 132.

³³¹ D. Kerfoot & S. Whitehead, 'Boys Own Stuff: Maculinity and the Management of Further Education', in G. Anderson, 2005.

While gender relations may exacerbate relations of privilege and power within academic settings their genesis can sometimes best be located in the founding of a restructured entity. Collectives that are 'absorbed' into an existing organisational entity may find it difficult to challenge power relations and to open them up to change:

Q: How do schools and thus academics get marginalised?

It happens in terms of funding, approval for casual staff, it's in terms of the research agenda, areas of interest in research. Like we came in after and there was no change to the research agenda to take in the fact that there is now a broader social science in the division – that was never done (Christian, Countryside).

For this academic, their most recent experience of restructuring had made these exercises of power even more visible. This more recent reform resulted in a split of the social science school with some programs staying within the Division of Business while the rest were transferred to Arts. Despite the fact that this 'home' is viewed as more appropriate, this second restructure raised other concerns for those involved. What would stay and what would go was one bone of contention, as was the superior-inferior dynamic that was being deployed in the process of amalgamation into the new Divisions:

There was no discussion with us as staff until we insisted on it, no discussion at all. Splitting us up, carving us up here, there and everywhere. No consideration that we'd already done this, been through this two and a half years ago, no consideration of the identity of staff, of connection with other staff members. It was just will you fit in with this bit. That's how they did it.

We're going to have a struggle; we're going to have to struggle to win support for the school because of the power of one school within Arts. ... we were being asked by the dean to justify our units and teaching in terms of how it fits in with them. I refused to do it.

Q: And what happened?

It hasn't been done. I don't have to justify what I teach to another discipline area. This is a new entity! It is not them picking over us and us fitting in with them. It's

a new entity of Arts and Social Science – it's not them picking off the bits they want (Christian, Countryside).

Quite clearly, this academic learned a lesson from her experience of being restructured twice in two and a half years. The lesson is that academic units which are constructed as marginal or the 'other' through the exercises of power that enact an organisational re-alignment, become an enduring feature of the ongoing relations between the different groups that make up the reformed organisational entity. In order to avoid a repeat of the previous experience, this academic deployed the narrative of newness. This was an attempt to reframe the story of the restructure as one of foundation rather than colonisation. The intent of the reframe was to consign all existing arrangements and understandings to history and to begin anew with a clean slate. Given that the new school does not have a workload allocation document, performance management plan or research strategy it can be argued that this tactic has been successful. As one respondent, commented 'it's all up in the air at the moment' (Justice, Countryside).

Overall, academics' reflections on organizational restructures indicate the complexity of power relations within contemporary Australian universities. Like their Sandstone counterpart, staff employed in New universities like Bayside, Countryside and Cityside construct hierarchies on the basis of research dollars and international fee-generating activities. Being sexy or being in fashion is useful in the struggle for power and resources and student numbers count-sometimes-but not always.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has focussed on the perceptions and experiences of academics from the so-called New Universities. New Universities are buffered by positive electoral politics but they lack the positive reputation and large resource base enjoyed by their Sandstone counterparts.

Academics from New Universities struggle to access funding to support their scholarly activities. However, they are subject to less intense power relations particularly in relation to performance appraisal and review. Annual performance appraisals are not enforced within New Universities as they are in other universities examined in this thesis. In addition, the expectations are lower for academics at New Universities. ARC grants are highly desirable but they are not deemed to be a determining factor in regard to an academic's continuing employment. However, grants and publications are a factor in promotions processes. This is where New Universities are most able to exercise power.

Power is also a feature of university restructuring exercises and experiences of my interviewees suggest that these are a common occurrence. Individuals and discipline groups are differently positioned when it comes to exercising political freedom in relation to organisational restructures. This can negatively impact on a school's access to resources and influence in decision-making.

... coming from a sandstone university to a gumtree I can see a high difference in the culture. One has just got a lot more money. ... If you've got money you can keep everything running at a higher level. I think we're trying very hard to keep the status up which I don't disagree with but they've got more money to do that unlike a gumtree university. They've got so little money they're scraping to manage. They've got tutorial sizes twice as big as the sandstone university. I think the maximum at the sandstone is fifteen, [at the gumtree] up to thirty but more than thirty sometimes (Carson).

Chapter Six: Life in the Enterprise University: The View from a Gumtree University

In this chapter I turn academic experiences of certain power key power relations at work in the third kind of university. In this chapter I focus on the experiences and perceptions of academics at one Gumtree University and this is the name I give to this institution. The Gumtree Universities were established to give effect to a post-1945 nation-building commitment which fostered expansion of the number of higher education institutions and the student body. This nation-building phase also encouraged expansion of the knowledge base itself in terms of the range of subjects offered and the privilege given to research (both basic and applied)³³². This expansion was funded almost entirely from the public purse. Marginson and Considine suggest 'For a time individual Gumtrees could imagine that they might eventually equal Sandstones ... in resources and standing', however, the changes since the late 1980s have been 'unfavourable to the Gumtrees':

The Gumtree model was built on public funding not private funding or market position. The decline in the proportion of costs covered by the government hit them hard, and the Sandstones, Redbricks and Unitechs mostly outperformed them in fee-based education. Though several Gumtrees continued to perform well according to academic research indicators, in commercial research they lagged behind The Gumtrees also had less capacity to raise donations from alumni and others. Academic structures became more unstable. Some were forced to cannibalise strong areas to secure short-term returns. In the new zero-sum game,

³³² S. Marginson & M. Considine, *The Enterprise University: Power, Governance and Reinvention in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000.

positional advantage was more decisive than before. The Gumtree lacked positional advantage. Demand wise they were mostly the school-leaver's second, third or fourth choice. Geographically, they were marooned in suburbia³³³.

The rise of the 'Enterprise University' as the archetypal model for Australian universities has, arguably, been a more severe challenge to Gumtree Universities than to any other segment of the higher education sector. In effect, Gumtree universities are caught between two difficulties; they were unable to draw on a wealth of inherent advantage like their Sandstone counterparts and they could not rely on the favourable electoral politics that buffered many New universities³³⁴. In this regard, Gumtree universities are precariously placed within the hierarchy of Australian higher education institutions.

This precarious positioning plays an important part in the power relations within this Gumtree University. From the perspective of my Gumtree respondents, executive command is a routine feature of this institution - 'we get very clear directives from the senior faculty or the university that say we should produce more of this or do more of that' (Kennedy). These directives are constituted within a discourse of failure:

What we are told to do, is to be more research active and that's an issue in terms of the ARC and the NH & MRC funded research, that's what people are told that they're meant to be doing – that we're failing at, at the moment (Carson).

In effect, the university leadership constitutes itself as diagnostician and encourages its academics to identify with and take a stake in the health of the organisation. As with the discourse of privilege that circulates around the corridors of the Performative University, the discourse of failure at the Gumtree University encourages academics to associate

³³³ Marginson & Considine, 2000, p. 199

³³⁴ A number of Gumtree universities are based in rural/regional areas (for example the University of New England and James Cook University) and as such can invoke the politics of location and access additional funding from the Commonwealth.

their individual well-being with the wellbeing of the institution. Not only does this serve to focus the activities of academics but it also warrants the exercise of sovereign power.

The Gumtree University was not undergoing a major restructuring exercise unlike its 'New' counterparts at the time I interviewed staff. However, one of the ways in which this institution is responding to its precarious positioning is to expand its geographical presence into rural/regional areas. In this regard, power relations between different academic entities are not as significant as those between the School of Social Work and the executive. Indeed, in relation to the social work school, the strategy of expansion has been implemented without consultation. This issue was raised when I inquired into the way in which power is exercised within the university:

It's very concentrated, by and large, in what we call, in the building where the vice chancellor is. It's very concentrated there. Key future directions are determined centrally. I was told I had to run a programme – social work programme – in the regional area that I definitely didn't want to run and they went and got the money, they went and got the places from the government without asking me and they told me I had to do it.

Q: Who told you?

The Vice Chancellor told me I had to do it

Q: and why was that?

Because they saw the future of the university is in regional areas and particularly in this, in opening up this one regional area that's why. So, power is quite centralised. ...*I don't like the way my university operates but I think its position is tricky* (Morgan).

In effect, the discourse of failure warrants the institutionalization of a hierarchy of command and obedience between the executive, middle management and academics in general. In this regard, academics are excluded from the decision-making processes of the university and thus have little say in relation to the conditions of their institutional existence.

Gumtree University, like all others examined in this study, maintains a hierarchy of preferred academic activity. This is a normative framework that positions some activity as highly desirable and others as less worthy. When I asked questions about what is valued within this institution my respondents were quite emphatic in their answers:

Oh its research, gaining research money and publications, very much that's the hierarchy, teaching is right down the bottom. You've got to keep that running along but that's not what you get the brownie points for (Madison).

This hierarchy of activity and the low positioning of teaching are supported by the comments of another academic who argued:

More and more people are not here for the teaching. The teaching responsibilities we have are not what you get on in. You're much more likely to get honour ... let's call it your researching, in general. Teaching is not a core role for most academics. It's something that pays the bills and schools get money from students that come through, but it doesn't get the status, nor do we get the incentives to do that well. It's meant to be a juggle between the different roles that we've got but in my work experience, both here and more broadly, in the academic community teaching is almost negligibly important. It's something that you do, so you do it with the least trouble (Teagan).

Community service is an acceptable practice but it is not well rewarded. Academics can use this as evidence of performance but it is not a major factor in relation to career progression.

In effect, academics working at the Gumtree University are left in no doubt as to what activities are to be given primacy. The normative regime at work in this university is essentially the same as that which operates in the other universities I examined as part of this research. In this regard, the lived experience of gumtree academics is congruent with academics from the other universities. It is also congruent with research conducted by

Craig McInnis³³⁵. McInnis claims that teaching is generally accorded a relatively low status within Australian universities and that it is not well supported in terms of professional development. In 1999, McInnis surveyed 2609 academics from 15 Australian Universities in order to explore the changing work roles of academics. In his report to the Higher Education Division (of what was then the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs), McInnis detailed his findings in relation to the realities and preferences of the reward structures that prevail within Australian Universities:

An overwhelming majority of those who responded to this item (91%) see research and scholarly activity as the current priority in the reward system. This is followed fairly closely by the ability to attract external funds (82%). These and the two related activities of administrative and leadership skills (59%), and contribution to committees and other administrative work (52%) are well ahead of effectiveness as a teacher (44%) in the perceived rewards system. This rates twice as high as length of service (22%). Community service is considered by 29 per cent as an activity rewarded in promotions.

In the list of what should be rewarded, some major gaps between realities and preferences appear. In this instance, teaching shifts from fifth place in the current rewards system to first place in the preferred criteria. The 95 per cent nominating teaching is more than double the proportion who see it as currently rewarded. Research is second at 89 per cent suggesting that academics prefer that teaching and leadership skills remain at third position in the preferred list with a greater level of support (70%) than currently given (59%). The ability to attract funds stands out as a potentially major cause of dissonance for academics. It is clearly considered to be less important (46%) than is currently perceived to be the case (82%). Also, many more academics would certainly prefer to see more importance attached to community services (55%) in contrast to current promotions policy³³⁶.

McInnis draws attention to the peculiar nature of the academic profession ‘... where people are employed and rewarded largely on the basis of their capacity to succeed in what they do for 20-25 per cent of their work time (research), and where activities that

³³⁵ C. McInnis, *The Work Roles of Academics in Australian Universities*, Evaluations and Investigations Programme, Higher Education Division, 1999, http://www.dest.gov.au/archive/highered/eippubs/eip00_5/fullcopy.pdf, viewed 12 January 2006.

³³⁶ McInnes, 1999, p. 14.

make up more than 50 per cent of the time (teaching), have traditionally been undervalued by the reward system³³⁷. This claim is strongly supported by Gumtree academics. One respondent from this university argued 'we attract new staff according to their research profiles more than their teaching. It seems to be a given that if you research and bring in money and have a PhD then you can teach, and these people have never done it'.

The university's hierarchy of desirable/expected functions is reinforced through success rituals that are similar to those found at the other universities. Staff meetings are used to congratulate those who have achieved something deemed valuable to the organisation. The recognition of achievements is patchy:

... everyone is expected to kind of shout it to the roof tops every time you get a dollar. If you go to the staff meetings – has anyone got anything to report? Any grants? Any publications?

Usually you wouldn't say if you'd just got a journal article published but if you've had a book published. Bring your book along, 'here's my book', or they might invite you to their launch or something like that (Dakota).

The covers of books that have been written by staff are placed on public display in a glass case which is located in a prominent place in the Social Work School. This further reinforces the privilege given to certain activities and what counts as success:

I haven't got anything in that case and I doubt I ever will sometimes! You know what I mean. Like you walk past and sometimes your eyes must graze across it. I try not to look at it too much actually.

Q: Why is that?

Well because I just think it's probably going to make me feel more anxious and overwhelmed and kind of more inadequate I suppose (Dakota).

³³⁷ McInnes, 1999, p. 5.

In effect, the display case creates a field of visibility which acts as a technique of power in that it encourages academics to evaluate and address their own performance in relation to the expectations of the university and in comparison to their colleagues. This exemplifies Foucault's argument that power and visibility are intimately entwined. Foucault puts it:

He who is subjected to a field of visibility and who knows it assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection³³⁸.

In this instance it is not a constraining power relation, but a productive one in that it seeks to promote particular actions rather than *repress* them. In contrast to Foucault's account of the effects of a public gaze, it is not the visible who are being disciplined but rather those who lack visibility. Nonetheless, it is clear that the presence of the display case encourages academics to internalise the power of expectations and at least some academics are doing so. In effect, the comparative aspect of collegial relations combined with a more intense competitive ethos has resulted in a climate where, in the words of one interviewee 'everyone is watching their back and quite scared that they might be made to look bad if someone else is looking better' (Carson). In this regard, the power of surveillance extends beyond the relations between supervisors and their subordinate staff to those between colleagues. Performance becomes comparative rather than absolute. This parallels conditions that exist within the Performative University discussed in chapter four. However, in that university the relativity was based in individual performances – what they had achieved in a given year compared to the previous year. In contrast, the perception of academics at the Gumtree University suggests that performance is a judgement made not in reference to the self, but in reference to others.

³³⁸ M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, Penguin Books, London, 1979, pp. 202-203.

In a somewhat contradictory manner this Gumtree University encourages academic specialization and collegial collaboration. One academic noted that her record had been subject to criticism in her annual performance review:

I've been told I'm very eclectic because I do something in the valuing of the aged, I do something in health, I did ageing, I've done something in field education, admissions. I've done something on everything whatever excites me, I am very flexible I suppose. But from a professional point of view it's been a very bad thing because I haven't got a track record as an expert at anything. They always tell me that this isn't very good – you're doing this and doing that – but up till now it's only been advice (Madison).

Another staff member that it was important for academics in the current environment to actively manage their publications record. According to this respondent, an academics' publication record can be deemed problematic in a number of ways:

There's pressure on us to publish in tandem with our colleagues. It doesn't look as if we are being collegial if all our publications are as individuals. If all your publications are as individuals it starts to look like you are too much a lone ranger. ... Then again, you don't want to do too much with others because that would all start to look like you can't do it on your own. That doesn't look good (Dakota).

Clearly, the surveillance of performance at the Gumtree University is encouraging academics to engage in self-management techniques aimed at shaping their productivity in ways that align with the normative framework of the institution within which they work. In effect, academics must regulate their actions in such a way as to strike a balance between 'individual' and 'collective' practice. This is not something that academics in any other university I looked at had to contend with. Nor, is it a practice that has a long history. Although scholarly activities have always been a social practice, (with academics drawing on and responding to the work of each other within the bounds of collective norms that define what is virtuous in research and publication) 'individualism' has long been the mark of academic life. In this regard, the need to strike the correct balance is a novel aspect of power relations in the Gumtree University.

The expectations of the Gumtree Universities and its hierarchy of valued activities are reinforced by a 'teaching-only' discourse. Unlike the new universities, this discourse is individualised within this institution. The threat is not that the university will become a teaching-only institution but rather that individual positions will be constituted in this way. Senior management have warned the academic body that people may be required to engage in particular activities:

The Faculty is very much saying, or at least we are told, that if we're not research active then we may be put into a category where we are just going to do teaching (Carson).

The threat of a teaching-only role privileges a particular organisational objective – increased research effort and legitimates the senior managements' 'right' to determine how this will be done. This threatens academics' freedom, not only to undertake particular scholarly activities but also their capacity to constitute an academic identity that includes all of the things that they value about who they are. Research and publication have long been central activities in the traditional construction of an academic identity. These activities are also the means through which academics establish a reputation in the academic community at large³³⁹. On this basis, senior managements' assertion of a prerogative to require academics to work as teachers only is a significant exercise of power, not just because it is distinctly asymmetrical but also because it limits people's capacity to achieve an academic sense of self that they value. As one respondent put it 'it's a worry, to me being a 'real' academic means that you do research'. The construction of teaching-only positions as a risk or threat encourages academics to respond by managing their time and effort in line with the privileged objective. In effect, managerial power combines with self-governance to form a more intense power relation, one which is designed to shape the exercise of freedom in particular ways.

³³⁹ S. Harley, 'The impact of Research Selectivity on Academic Work and Identity in UK Universities' in *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2002.

The threat to establish teaching-only positions at the Gumtree University can be seen as a response to the governments' moves to develop a Research Quality Framework (RQF). The RQF is a mechanism which '... will enable a comprehensive assessment of the quality and impact of research outputs produced by Research Groupings within Australia's universities'³⁴⁰. The proposed model announced late in 2006 is expected to dictate funding that is currently distributed through the Governments' grant schemes including those administered by the ARC. The RQF encourages universities to direct the research efforts of staff in that the model assesses the outcomes of groups rather than individuals.

In an act of pre-emptive compliance, the Gumtree University is encouraging staff to undertake collaborative research in teams, to develop what one respondent called 'quasi research units'. This strategy goes hand in hand with the requirements to specialise and publish with others. The push to concentrate research efforts hasn't been enthusiastically embraced by all members of the school. Academics experience this as detrimental to their freedom. As one interviewee noted, 'it limits our ability to do what we want to do, we're being pushed into the research agendas of others' (Carson).

Academics at the Gumtree University have not been captured by the discourse of their institution. Indeed, dissent is part of the lived experience of a number of academics I interviewed at this university. Tensions exist in regard to individual's reactions to each other and to the actions of management. One Senior Gumtree academic stated 'In our school, we get a bit confused. By and large most of the academics, not all, would say that they're there to teach – that's the most important thing, is good teaching, but there's a small minority that say no, it has got to be research' (Morgan). The tensions that emerge from the different positions taken by staff are evident in the following exchange:

The toughest debates that I have here – the ones that I think are most polarising – are with those folk that I think are outright careerists. There are some very

³⁴⁰ Commonwealth of Australia, *Research Quality Framework: Assessing the quality and impact of research in Australia*, <http://www.dest.gov.au/>, 2005, p. 12, viewed 12 December 2005.

difficult discussions that happen and don't happen around that. I'm not saying that I'm some holier than thou exemplar of the right mind, but I've got some very different points of view to some other players.

Q: What are some of the difficulties in the discussion?

Well, I think there are differences in value systems – there's a level of implicit, if not explicit blame that gets played out both ways. You're doing the wrong thing ... being careerist, is being cynical about or not juggling the different balls that we've got to keep in the air adequately ... it gets very personal, so, they say the same about me – you're not getting on with it and ... you're not helping us to be better positioned.

Q: When you say some people are careerist, what does that look like?

If you're a careerist – you'll just get on with doing the minimum stuff, you'll get your teaching allotment, you'll scrap and scratch to have it as minimal as possible and if something else comes up, as one of my colleagues said the other day when they were asked if they'd be involved with an extra-curricular thing, he said really clearly, well what's in it for me? A good little neo-liberal representative! Neo-liberal subjectivity – it's just about me! And that's what careerists are about (Teagan).

Similar criticisms were made by other academics in the Social Work School. One stated that 'you have to be selfish to get ahead' (Carson), another commented that some people within the School were approaching their role 'very strategically' (Dakota). The comments suggest that there are significant conflicts within the school in terms of the professional identity of staff – what being an academic means, the kinds of dispositions, practices and understandings of self that are constructed, enacted, supported or challenged within the work place. Ruth Barcan lends support to this claim more generally arguing that contemporary Australian academics are 'situated simultaneously within a number of different models of professional practice'. These discourses produce different versions of 'the academic' and the 'academic function'³⁴¹:

³⁴¹ R. Barcan, 'The Body of the (Humanities) Academics, or, "what is an academic?"', *Southern Review*, Vol. 29, Is. 2, 1996, p. 129.

In the simultaneous, if contested and uneven, existence of a number of models for understanding academic work, and given the perennial competition for infrastructure support, the body of the individual academic seems to be one prime site where attempts to reconcile their multiple and often competing demands may be played out³⁴².

Barcan identifies three key versions of 'the academic' within the contemporary higher education landscape. These are academic 'as specialist'; academic 'as servant' and academic 'as corporate representative'. The academic 'as specialist' is located in a traditional scholarly discourse in which:

...the academic is a specialist in a field of knowledge. As a researcher/scholar, s/he is a member of an elite discursive community; as a teacher, s/he participates in the formation of subjectivities and the inculcation of students into a discipline of which s/he is a master³⁴³.

In contrast to this elitism, the academic 'as servant' positions academic work in a bureaucratic/administrative logic:

The second discourse is, broadly speaking, a bureaucratic one, in which institutionally based academic work has become increasingly driven by the exigencies of and administrative logic – both at an institutional level and governmental level – rather than by a logic internal to the intellectual work being carried out. This discourse interpellates the academic as a link in a big chain: an office worker, an organiser of time and space, a servant of the university at large, a manager of information³⁴⁴.

The third identity formation academic 'as corporate representative' is a cluster of managerial/corporate and entrepreneurial discourses which construct the academic as a maker of contracts, seller of products and a corporate representative – an intellectual hustler that peddles scholarly products under a given university's brand.

³⁴² Barcan, 1996, p. 129

³⁴³ Barcan, 1996, p. 130

³⁴⁴ Barcan, 1996, p. 130

Elements of all three of these paradigmatic constructions of ‘the academic’ are evident in the response one Gumtree staff member gave when I asked ‘what does it mean to be a good academic?’

I think here definitely it is to be available, to put your hands up to do things, to put in the hours that are required to do these roles, to not slip up in your marking through to making sure you put any research in to journals. I’ve been told that the cream of the crop is overseas journals and they are the ones you should be going for. So there’s a sense that you’re being strategic and that you’re building a profile that you can market to the community, ... that you’re individually drawing in higher degree students, your getting more students that benefit your work. Getting practitioners to take your programme and running workshops. It is having a high profile nationally and internationally (Carson).

Indeed, Barcan suggests that these different discourses are not necessarily in conflict. This suggestion is supported by the comments of a Social Work teacher at the Gumtree:

... there’s many, many powerful pushes towards doing your “cores”, and that means getting on with something that’s popular, that’s going to assist this corporation. But, you know, we can talk about it openly and that’s an important thing to be able to do – the tensions are there. It’s much worse if it gets played out in indirect and therefore, often poisonous ways. We can actively debate this stuff and there is some level – and this is my interpretation – there is some level of tolerance for ... that people will do this differently (Teagan).

While this can be treated as evidence of the university’s tolerance of difference, an alternative argument might also be made. That it is possible that these identities are able to sit side-by-side because they each conform to the same logic – academics exist to service the desired ends of the university in terms of prestige, organisational efficiency and income-generation. In effect, the power relations that regulate academic’s identities and actions support a degree of procedural freedom whilst limiting their substantive freedom. In other words, while the *means* remain fluid the *ends* are non-negotiable.

Contests over academic identity and functions are often managed within processes that seek to implement institutional workload policies. The Gumtree University has devolved

responsibility for workload policy to the Faculty level. In this regard, each Faculty has to develop a workload policy for all of its Schools. Thus there can be variations between Faculties. The School of Social Work sits in a faculty that has instigated a credit point system. Thus an academic gets credit for a range of activities. A middle-manager from this university spelled out the basics of this approach:

We operate on points where we weigh up each activity *and it depends on what needs to be done each year*. But I would think that you'd be looking at about an average of 10 hours, 10 to 12 as being a full time teaching load –when you don't take out any other activities such as co-ordination and stuff like that (Morgan).

This approach is different to some of the other universities in this study that have a compulsory minimum number of teaching hours. A number of participants argued that this more formalized workload policy has brought greater levels of rationality and transparency to the distribution of workload – ‘before, people were getting away with murder’. However, issues of time and opportunity are still problematic for some of my respondents, particularly those who are new to academia. This became evident when I asked one early-career Gumtree academic, what are the key things that are disabling in relation to your exercise of freedom?

Well, two things come immediately to mind – one is just the workload. It's pretty horrendous for the time you've got, so you're frantically busy, especially if you're not well established. If you're well established and you've got grant money coming in, you can buy out of teaching, some of it and concentrate on your research, but for a lot of staff like me who have not been there a long time, there's not a pool of money to draw on, you're so flat out just covering the increasing number of students, and the teaching load. That has a huge impact on my doing any research.

The other is: just how difficult it is to get research money, how competitive you've got to be and such a large amount of these funds go to people based on their track record, so if you don't have as much of a track record in research – you're just trying to get into that, its pretty constrained, a pretty tough world to get into (Carson).

These problems are inter-related. The more time a new academic has to spend on teaching and preparation the less time they have for research which impacts on their track record and thus their ability to compete for research grants. This, in turn, diminishes their capacity to 'buy out' their teaching and the cycle continues. The last-quoted respondent contends that 'success breeds success' (Carson). This is one way of framing these dynamics. A different frame considers the question of peer-exploitation. Worthington and Hodgson³⁴⁵ argue that academics use distancing strategies which enable them to avoid being significantly involved in particular activities. These activities are then left to others who are not well positioned to distance themselves from institutional demands. In effect, distancing strategies enable some academics to escape the effects of prevailing power relations. This in turn, increases the effects on others and limits their capacity to exercise freedom.

In addition to the pressures of time, the difficulty of accessing resources is also a key issue for academics at the Gumtree University. Despite placing a similar value on research and publications as its Sandstone counterpart, the Gumtree University is unable to compete in terms of the actual support that it gives to its academics. This is evident in the reflections of one academic who has had the experience of working in both institutional types:

I got a research grant, a starter research grant at [name of sandstone] I got twenty thousand dollars. I got a starter research grant at [name of gumtree] I got five thousand [Dollars] (Carson).

The level of institutional support is important. In effect, it constrains or defines academic's potential to exercise freedom. In other words, the endless potential of freedom is actualised to the extent of whatever a five thousand dollar grant will buy, and all things being equal, this is much less freedom than that afforded by a grant of twenty

³⁴⁵ F. Worthington & J. Hodgson, 'Academic labour and the politics of quality in higher education: a critical evaluation of the conditions of possibility of resistance', in *Critical Quarterly*, Vol. 47, Issue 1-2, July, 2005.

thousand dollars. This level of support may result from financial imperatives but it still bounds the field of action in terms of what academics can do.

One way that academics at this university compensate for a lack of institutional support is to tender for contract research, primarily with government agencies. Consultancy funding or tied research money is pursued by academics across all of the three kinds of universities explored in this study. Deanna De Zilwa examined the entrepreneurial strategies of the different segments of the Australian higher education sector and finds that tied research money accounted for 13 per cent of Gumtrees' total independent revenue for the year 2001³⁴⁶. Admittedly, at 20 per cent, the Sandstone Universities reliance on tied research funding is markedly higher. However, it should be noted that the Sandstones vary significantly in terms of the extent to which they pursue tied research funding and in this regard the figure of 20 percent is skewed by the data for the University of Queensland which attracted more in consultancy/contract research funds than the universities of Adelaide, Melbourne, Tasmania and Western Australia combined³⁴⁷. Tied research funding accounted for only 6 percent of New universities independent revenue³⁴⁸.

Consultancies and/or contract research can be seen as both enabling and disabling. They provide funding for a particular piece of research or evaluation to be done but can also involve a censorship element in terms of what the academic can say in relation to a particular issue. One Gumtree academic who had a lot of experience when it comes to consultancies and contract research voiced concerns about the increased in tied research funding and its effects on academic freedom:

³⁴⁶ D. De Zilwa, 'Using Entrepreneurial Activities as a Means of Survival: Investigating the Processes Used by Australian Universities to Diversify Their Revenue Streams, in *Higher Education*, Volume 50, No. 3, October, 2005, pp. 394.

³⁴⁷ De Zilwa, 2005, p. 394.

³⁴⁸ De Zilwa, 2005, p. 395.

I'm basically concerned about the notion of all this tied research money, that is research that is being bought for particular areas with potential – strong potential for the result to be constrained somewhat towards the view of whoever has funded it and I think that's a really dangerous way to go.

... because you have to bring in the money that is going to shape what you do a lot of the time – the outcome or what's said because the final report is often negotiated by the funding body so the results don't necessarily come out as the researcher/evaluator might have initially preferred – there's huge amounts of compromise in all that. I have a lot of first hand knowledge of that (Carson).

This person's had experience of working on both sides – as a government employee who had worked in an area that contracts researchers and as an academic tendering for tied research money:

... If you want government money you've got to be seen as credible and user-friendly with people who might want to employ you or give you a tender. If they see you as very hostile, you're not going to get anything (Carson).

This requirement to be 'user-friendly' is supported in the Australian research literature which details other academics' experiences of contract research, particularly with government agencies. For example, Presdee and Walters explored the 'policing of knowledge' in criminological research by way of a case study of the suppression of academic freedom they experienced when undertaking a review of the South Australian crime prevention strategy³⁴⁹. These authors detailed a number of tactics used to pressure them into providing a user-friendly report and, when that failed, to suppress publication of the findings of their research. The experience of these criminology researchers is supported by the Australia Institutes' study on academic freedom and the commercialisation of Australian universities. The authors of this research argue that

³⁴⁹ M. Presdee & R. Walters, 'The Perils and Politics of Criminological Research and the Threat to Academic Freedom' in *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1998, pp. 156-167.

pressure to attract tied research money is channelling academic effort into 'safe', well defined areas of research³⁵⁰.

Gumtree University, like many universities, is ambivalent about contract research and consultancies. As one Gumtree academic argued 'in terms of brownie points in the university, that money doesn't count' (Teagan). Another noted that 'It's not just the money – it's where it comes from that's important. The money is handy but its ARC money that gets you the credibility within the system' (Carson). ARC funding can also be viewed as tied research money even though it is allocated through a peer review process. As indicated previously, the Federal government has specified a number of research 'priority areas' for ARC funding. In 2005-2006 they were:

- Research Priority 1: An Environmentally Sustainable Australia.
- Research Priority 2: Promoting and Maintaining Good Health.
- Research Priority 3: Frontier Technologies for Building and Transforming Australian Industries.
- Research Priority 4: Safeguarding Australia³⁵¹.

Although the second research priority incorporates a goal of 'strengthening Australia's social and economic fabric', the document that details these priority areas specifically states that this goal 'supports the Government's welfare reform and participation agendas'. This has the potential to limit the prospects for funding that is critical of the social policies or social-political arrangements that shape people's current life experiences. It is difficult to establish whether this is actually occurring. However, it is

³⁵⁰ C. Kayrooz, P. Kinnear & P. Preston, 'Academic Freedom and Commercialisation of Australian Universities, Perceptions and Experiences of Social Scientists', The Australia Institute, Discussion Paper, No. 37, 2001, p. 37.

³⁵¹ Australian Research Council, *Descriptions of Designated National Research Priorities and Associated Priority Goals*, n.d., http://www.arc.gov.au/pdf/2004_designated_national_research_priorities_&_associate.pdf, viewed 10 October 2005.

important to note that many academics think it does. As one of my respondents from the Gumtree university put it:

We need to get money for research and it's a question of where the priorities are for ARC funding, where they are spending their money. The government has a huge amount of control over that and our social justice areas are not the flavour of the month – so that limits hugely what you do.You have to nominate your research, which area it fits under and if you're looking for a grant and some areas get funded and some don't so its really fundamental control through the purse strings. That flows all the way through so you're not going to have a great career in the university if you say your going to research, I'm speculating, the insurgent groups and how you re-shape the governments agenda. You're not going to get funded and I do think governments have got much smarter at controlling things (Madison).

Other academics expressed support for this proposition arguing that when it comes to planning their research activity they do take into account what areas are the 'flavour of the month' (Morgan). In the words of one participant, 'unfortunately, I do need think about what will sell – I can't afford not to' (Dakota). Precariously positioned within university regimes that construct ARC Discovery grants as the Holy Grail, governmental practices that seek to determine the shape of that cup and threatening discourses that invoke anxiety about academics' future as researchers, it is not surprising that gumtree staff experience pressure to conform. The various power relations and the way they intersect encourages complicity.

As indicated in previous chapters, research is not the only activity that is constituted in and through institutional power relations. Teaching is another site where power is exercised in ways that shape what academics do. From the standpoint of Gumtree academics, teaching is an activity that can generate very negative emotions:

I think most academics are terrified out of their wits when they have to take on this huge teaching load and certainly in the first year most people talk about their first year in academia as a living hell really. ... It's just that you have this huge amount of material to prepare and no time in which to do it and we seem to have a

huge number of classes. I remember a colleague of mine, in this university. He said he would go into the tutorial room and not know why he was there. He had so many different subjects and so many classes that he was just spun out basically. ... I felt, being part-time, that I was a little bit protected – but the thought of having to do twice as much as what I was doing makes me feel very jittery inside because I think, well, that would have just sent me towards some kind of breakdown I reckon (Kennedy).

Research by Craig McInnis suggests that either poor professional development or its complete absence has contributed to the level of fear and anxiety experienced by academics. McInnis notes that although professional development is increasingly emphasised in Australian Universities, it is still an activity that is undertaken by a minority of academics:

Professional development activities have assumed increased importance in the eyes of institutional policy makers intent on improving teaching quality. However, for the most part this remains a voluntary activity. The academics surveyed were asked if, at the start of their career, or in the last 2 years, they had received training in teaching methods. Just over one-third (34%) had received some training at the start of their career. A quarter had some professional development in teaching methods in the 2 years prior to the survey. New academics are now more likely to get some form of training through induction programmes at the start of their careers, although the majority (56%) still do not³⁵²

The lack of professional development and induction programs has consequences not only for students but also for the academics themselves. One academic at Gumtree pointed out that as a new academic 'I didn't get a lot of support or help with what's going on, I had to learn by osmosis and that really stressed me out' (Dakota). The negative experience of teaching is potentially exacerbated by the fact that it occupies a low position on the university's hierarchy of academic work. Despite the ubiquitous discourse of 'excellence', universities have not invested very much in this particular function:

³⁵² C. McInnes, 'Changing Academic Work Roles: the everyday realities challenging quality in teaching', *Quality in Higher Education*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2000, pp. 149-150.

It doesn't seem to me that people actually care about educational excellence per se – you know. Like, no one really thinks that maybe we should get staff trained up a bit in better teaching strategies and techniques. ... Most people in academia have never had any training. They're in their subjects and then suddenly they're expected to be able to impart this knowledge to others in an effective manner and that doesn't usually work out too well (Kennedy).

Although teaching is accorded little status in this institution, the university is still sensitive to student criticism. Indeed, one respondent from Gumtree University noted that individual student complaints were 'taken very seriously' by the university (Teagan). As was the case at the other universities, this is viewed as a change which had accompanied the rise of the discourse of the student-as-consumer:

I think the power of the consumer has increased a lot over the last twenty-five years that I have been involved in universities. I think there are some really good things about that, students – and perhaps even staff – can at times challenge when they feel that their rights aren't being upheld. ... But the kind of shadow side of that is that it has been very intimidating for academics. ... Many academics say they are quite threatened when they walk into a classroom that someone might take exception to them and make a complaint and if there is a complaint made, the onus is always on the academic to defend their behaviour, teaching style and that, I think, has been very undermining of academic confidence.

A number of years ago, the Ombudsman in a case where a student made a complaint against me said 'well academics are very exposed, you're in a very public place and really what people are going to say about you or complaints they are going to make about you –you're kind of really left to defend those alone' (Kennedy).

Numerous academics from this university voiced profound unease about student feedback on teaching and the institution's response to it. Those new to the university expressed surprise at how much emphasis was placed on evaluation scores. As one respondent put it, student complaints or a lower than desired score on teaching/course evaluations will see the academic put 'in the hot seat' with questions being raised about teaching styles and the intellectual content of the subject (Carson). This occurs in public

in that poor evaluations are raised and discussed at staff meetings. There is also a hierarchical power relation involved in that the dean of the faculty examines all evaluations and if there are any issues 'the head of department is expected to come up with an action plan to address these' (Morgan). One notable difference between Gumtree University and its Sandstone and New counterparts is that subject evaluations occur bi-annually rather than annually.

Regardless of their frequency, academic anxiety and insecurity around teaching evaluations is fuelled by two key factors. The first is the perception that the emergence of the student as consumer discourse means that academics are considered guilty until proven innocent. From the perspective of one of my interviewees 'the onus always seems to be on the academic to defend their behaviour and teaching style, that is very undermining of academic confidence'. The second source of insecurity stems from academics' understanding that feedback scores can be negatively affected by factors that are unrelated to their teaching practice. This last point was made clear during the interviews. One Gumtree academic argued that these scores can be affected by 'the personality of the person, the difficulty of the subject, the course content – all sorts of stuff' (Kennedy). Another suggested that she had been handed a golden chalice in regard to what subjects she is teaching:

I feel that is part of the reason I've gotten off lightly. There are all sorts of variables that might come into play. If you're teaching statistics to a bunch of social work students you might find that not all of them are really going to be enamoured with the subject (Madison).

Within the Gumtree University, the insecurity of some staff has been heightened by the fact that they have witnessed one of their colleagues being 'pushed out the door'. Although this staff member resigned, a number of participants felt that this person had been left with no alternative. From the perspective of these academics, this colleague had lost their position because they were 'a perfectionist' and 'insistent on maintaining

academic standards'. Although, the validity of this claim cannot be tested, nor can any judgement be made about the appropriateness of the university's actions, the events have been constructed, by a number of interviewees, as a salutatory lesson in what happens to people who are seen as non-conformist.

Chapter Summary

The Gumtree Universities are precariously positioned with the hierarchy of Australian universities. Unable to draw on extensive institutional capital or positive electoral politics, the Gumtree University struggles to compete for students, research funding and alternative sources of income. The Gumtree University has responded with strategies of expansion and consolidation. The executive have exercised their managerial prerogative to force the School of Social Work to provide courses through another campus and they have threatened to pigeon-hole staff if they don't increase their contribution to the University's research quantum.

The experiences and perspectives of Gumtree academics suggest that the surveillance of staff performativity has increased as has the degree to which the University is prepared to specify what counts as an appropriate and desirable research and publications record. In this regard, Gumtree academics have to negotiate tensions between individualistic and collective ways of being and acting.

Teaching is a source of anxiety for a number of Gumtree academics and there is little evidence that my participants trust their University to support them if a student makes a complaint. Teaching practice is now more regulated and monitored than it has previously been.

The Gumtree University maintains a hierarchy of desirable academic activities and outcomes as does every university examined in this thesis. This hierarchy reflects the institution-wide policy framework within which the universities operate. Arc grants are

the cream of the crop. Teaching and community service are not highly regarded and do not attract attention in the success rituals practiced within this university.

This is the last chapter to focus on the relations of power within particular university types. In the next chapter, I explore more directly the practice of freedom in the universities explored as part of this thesis.

The conditions of academic work are so tightly hedged in by reward and accountability systems that the freedom which academics still ‘enjoy’ in theory is, in practice, increasingly difficult to exercise. A freedom that rebounds negatively upon those that try to exercise it is not particularly liberating. It may be a consolation under these circumstances for academics to tell themselves that they ‘enjoy’ academic freedom. In practice, however, that enjoyment is becoming increasingly illusory³⁵³.

Chapter Seven: Academic resistance and the exercise of freedom in select Australian universities.

Like any modern work organisation universities are spaces where social interaction, the actual work performance and the various policy drivers attempts to shape work practices intersect in curious ways. Traditionally, it might be said university academic work was privatised and subject to little if any overt regulation. All of that has changes as I have shown in the previous three chapters. Though they are doing it differently each of the Schools I have examined in the Sandstone, New and Gumtree universities are now bearing witness to the combined effects of several decades of Federal Government policy designed to make universities more accountable and subject to policy directives. Senior managers have played their part in trying to reconfigure the work of academics. My Point in each of those chapters was simple: the academic’s experience of their role, their collegial relations, their identity and their work is being increasingly subject to regulation, surveillance and new kinds of incentives and punishments. We can no longer assume that whatever was once meant by ‘academic freedom’ still holds true in the universities, we should expect to find new ways of thinking about and of trying to give shape to the idea.

In this chapter I turn my attention more directly to the issue of freedom. In particular, I explore the perceptions, experiences of freedom in relation to traditional academic liberties – the capacity to exercise professional judgement in relation to teaching, the freedom to manage their own time and the ability to conduct research into topics they are interested in. Given my argument that the political freedom of academics is a

³⁵³ J. Nixon, M. Beattie, M. Challis & M. Walker, ‘What does it Mean to be an Academic? A Colloquium’, in *Teaching in Higher Education*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1998, p. 279. The contributor in this instance is J. Nixon.

necessary condition for the achievement of appropriate institutional supports and the enactment of these academic liberties I use most of this chapter to detail academic resistance to the emergence of the 'enterprise university' model and the practices that have accompanied it.

Traditional academic liberties

Historically, academics have enjoyed a range of professional liberties. The conditions of their working existence were marked by a relative absence of directives in relation to how they were to undertake academic activities. The experience and perspectives of academics interviewed for this study suggest that in relation to these liberties some things have changed whilst other have stayed the same.

In terms of teaching, many of the academics in this study indicate that their practice is regulated to a degree by the prescriptions of their professional body. However, this has long been the case and the majority of participants either don't see this as an issue of freedom or if they do, it is one they are comfortable with. The ambivalence about these relations of power and freedom are evident in the following quote from a Sandstone academic:

In social work, obviously we have a mandated curriculum, so we have certain things we must teach but no-one tells us what we actually ... what the content will be in there. There's obviously conventions about, if you're going to teach a course on human development, you don't just make it all up, so ... its not a question of freedom, I guess it's a question of just being a responsible teacher, that you should know your field and things like that, however, there's no restraint, in terms of how you illustrate those things, I guess, in a sense, how you present what you choose to present in broad terms.

I don't think its constraining of our freedom, in the sense that we agree ... if you teach in a social work course, you agree that your curriculum is in broad terms mandated and that's just part of the deal. If you are going to graduate people who are eligible for membership of the accrediting body – then that's the deal (Kasey/Traditional).

In effect, any limitations that have their genesis in professional accreditation requirements are so taken for granted that they are not open to question. Adam Graycar's research on autonomy in higher education provides some support for this view. In his study on the professional education of engineers, Graycar makes a distinction between subjective and objective notions of academic freedom arguing that:

The level of objective freedom is set by the actors who have an interest in professional engineering education. The interests and resources of the professional association (and Government and industry) determine the limits within which course determination takes place. Within these limits the academic is relatively free.

Most of the academic respondents have internalized the values of the Institution of Engineers, (and Government and industry) and this internalization is one of the bases of a strong social control system. Half of the respondents do not regard the interests of these actors as restraints of any sort. The other half, who also operate within the social control system, find, however, that they are permitted to operate freely within the circumscribed limits. While they are aware of the limits, generally they do not think of challenging them³⁵⁴.

Only one academic employed at a New university treated the authority of external professional bodies as a problem:

I struggle with the notion that accreditation with professional bodies because it's a professional body that determines what the university's going to teach, and so they check whether or not you're teaching what they think you should be. It does seem to be a one-way street in relation to the whole notion of who should and shouldn't be in the profession and what they need to know to be in the profession. I think that there's a tension here. I don't know how that fits with what the university's role is in terms of informing practice and what should be in that. Research is predominantly done in the universities, so how does the research about professional practice, current thinking about ideas, in those disciplines – how does that inform the curriculum? It's as though, you've got this accrediting body who says this is what you will teach and then there is this research group over here at university exploring practice related issues and that doesn't necessarily feed across into what these people are saying should be taught? I've seen it happen in education, in nursing, in social work,

³⁵⁴ A. Graycar, 'Autonomy in Higher Education: Some Research Findings', in *The Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol XIII, No. 2, 1975, pp.44-45.

engineering, medicine – where's the two way street, if you like?
(Christian, Countryside)

It is important to note that this person was not social work trained. On this basis, I would argue that the process of 'internalisation' begins well before an academic takes up their first teaching appointment in a university. As undergraduates, prospective social workers have always had their degree programs circumscribed by the professional accreditation body. In effect, this begins the process of internalisation in that it both normalises and depoliticising these relations of power. It appears that the exercise of power by external professional bodies is an unremarkable event in the lives of contemporary social work academics.

This is not the case for all the kinds of relations and practices of power that impact on the teaching activities of academics. Institutional efforts to standardise course guides and specify graduate capabilities were experienced by participants as an encroachment on their freedom. Many viewed these as exercises of power that diminished their personal autonomy in terms of their capacity to organise courses, document the hows and whys of a particular offering and privilege specific outcomes as they see fit.

However, the lived experience of participants also suggests that these technologies of power were not totalising in their effects. One interviewee, who was deeply critical of the university's attempts to dictate course guides and regulate graduate capabilities also disclosed that, on occasion, she/he has diverged from what is in the 'approved' documents relating to the courses she/he teaches – 'you can get away with it if it's not too extreme. I make sure that I at least maintain the appearance of compliance and then inside the classroom I make changes if I think I need to. I have done that in the past and I will continue to do it' (Hunter, Bayside). In spite of the presence of practices that seek to standardise course offerings and teaching practice, it is possible for academics to exercise freedom. This is also the case in terms of graduate attributes and the extent to which they actually determine what happens in the classroom. Academics cannot chose not to specify and document the graduate attributes for a

given program of teaching but they can, and do, respond often in a rather tokenistic fashion to the requirement that these be a driving force within the lecture hall or seminar room.

What academics do when they teach is governed not just by institutional, professional or governmental power relations but also by the actions of students. Academics from every university included in this study reported increased pressure from students to satisfy student demands. This pressure has been intensified by the introduction of new surveillance mechanisms like evaluation surveys. For the most part academics view this as addressing past abuses but they also experience it as an encroachment on their freedom to exercise judgment in relation to the needs of students. The extent to which academic practice is actually shaped by the expectations of students depends on the degree to which student satisfaction is expected by the institution and reinforced through employment contract clauses and/ or the rigour of the relevant performance appraisal regimes. It also depends on the academics themselves and whether they think non-responsiveness is a risky proposition. Most respondents in this study believed that student satisfaction was something that they were not free to ignore. In effect, many academics are spending more time responding to the demands of students than they otherwise would if these power dynamics were not in play.

Although this is a source of discontent for a number of participants, the autonomy of academics as self-regulating professionals is still a freedom enjoyed to varying degrees by all participants. No one has to clock on and clock off. The value that the academics I spoke with place on this their 'professional autonomy' varied and seemed to depend on how long they had been working in academia. This autonomy was regarded as extraordinary to people who had extensive work experience outside of academia and who are relatively new to the university setting. As one person new to the Gumtree University put it:

The universities are incredibly free. I'm used to it now, but that first semester, I thought "gee ... don't we have to do a timesheet?" I always write on the board when I'm going to be in, for twenty-plus years I got more or less used to writing where I am! So we have those freedoms, which is wonderful (Dakota).

This aspect of academic freedom, the freedom to manage one's own time, is not examined in any of the major Australian surveys on the changing nature of academic work even though this is acknowledged in the literature as a defining feature of the 'profession'. Arguably, this 'professional autonomy' has become so normative that it is taken for granted by longer term academics and those who research the issue of academic freedom. However, it is important not least because, as indicated in previous chapters, this can be a double-edged sword. Often this practice of 'autonomy' intersects with performance appraisal processes and regimes of expectation designed to encourage some academics to work well beyond the hours officially recognised for their positions.

In effect, the management of academics' time happens indirectly through workload and appraisal regimes. Academics have core responsibilities and performance requirements that they must attend to and this governs how they spend their time. Arguably, the maintenance of this apparent freedom creates an illusion of professional autonomy at a time when academic lives are increasingly governed by necessity. In effect, academics are now free to do what they must.

For the majority of academics interviewed for this study, community engagement does not feature significantly in accounts of what they do. However this is patchy. Some academics are on governing boards of non-government organisations, or working parties/committees associated with their professional body (AASW). Academics at the Traditional University were given time to do this activity and as such they reported more extensive external engagements. This took the form of professional leadership roles. In other words, they worked with organisations that represented specific groups or communities. Only one academic worked directly with members of the general public and they did this outside of normal university work hours (Reagan, Cityside). Community engagement was not a core academic activity. In most of the schools examined in this thesis, community engagement is something that academics can bring into workload negotiations/performance as evidence of a form of productivity, but it was not given any privilege. It is acceptable if it does not impose on the performance of other functions that are valued more highly by the institution.

In terms of academic research, academics I interviewed for this study indicate that they are still able to exercise freedom in regard to the selection of topics. No participant reported that they had been directed to conduct research in a specific area. However, this apparent freedom was being shaped by reward regimes that privileged research that attracts funding. Pressure was being applied to consolidate research activity into teams. In effect, the stated interests of funding bodies and the university itself were influencing academic's decision-making about research. An academic from a New university stated 'I go where I think the money is' (Jessie, Bayside). Similar practices were talked about by academics at other institutions. One Sandstone respondent stated 'These research applications take up a lot of work and so I align my research agenda with the research areas that seem to be the in thing, what people are looking for' (Angel, Performative University).

Most interviewees treated the regulation of research as a problem and as a condition which limits their exercise of freedom. However, a small minority were willing participants in this process. Kasey from the Traditional University said:

I think that there are some core constructs that we can explore in relation to a whole lot of different areas and I think that one of the things that we don't do very well, is actually, pay enough attention to each other's work, so that we can say, hey, what you're doing in relation to this community or that would be a really useful way of looking at what I'm researching in relation to this issue. Part of my role as head of research and graduate studies, is to try and create a culture where that is the norm, not the sort of ... one of the things that I guess I've always found very difficult about this department, is when I first joined it, it was like, 18 individuals doing private practice. No-one's research bore any relationship to anyone else's research. There weren't programmes of research. There were individuals pursuing individual interests.

... I was used to working as part of multi-disciplinary teams, and building research – you would do a phase one, and then say, well, what have we learned from that, so what do we now need to know? So, developing programmes of research and that again, is what I try to do here, by establishing a structure, a research structure or a structure to our research activities based on practice research units. So, I have attempted to get some programmatic thinking into our research – not to constrain it any ways, but to really get away from this highly individualistic, non-programmatic view of the research enterprise.

One Sandstone participant was more than happy to relinquish their capacity to exercise freedom if it meant greater success in regard to the development of industry partnerships. From this person's perspective, it is acceptable for industry partners to exercise power if this has 'positive pay-offs':

... I have the freedom to chose the topic but then, one of the industry partners would say – oh, well look we've got some changes in legislation, we'll only be involved if you include that. For me that makes for a richer research topic, that you're getting some people with, if you like, their real world experience and they're saying, this is the angle that would be really useful. So that might be a constraint on freedom but I ... it's a constraint that I actually, I think has a really positive pay-off... . A more obvious constraint is the use of particular words. Large government bureaucracies but also large NGO's will often have a word that they think is – oh, that's a really dangerous word to use in the current political environment. ... to some extent that's part of the political game and I don't have a problem with it – in that, if it ends up being that we do a 3 year project together ... I'm not going to give up on a project because I can't use a single word and I feel like the constraints ... I just have this ... maybe it's a bit of a masochistic thing but I think, this experience that I have of a lit bit of constraint, is nowhere near as much as the constraints that my students will face when they graduate and its good experience to just be reminded of that (Angel, Performative University).

In effect, some academics have willingly taken to the role of academic entrepreneur while others are opposed to it but feel compelled to comply. A small number of those interviewed are conscious of the pressure but push their own research agenda regardless. Three of my interviewees were undertaking research projects that could be treated as contentious in that they were critical of the federal government or state government policy. For example, one academic's current research examines the way in which welfare recipients have been demonised by politicians and the media. Importantly, this person works at the Performative University, the most authoritarian of all the universities examined as part of this project. This suggests that although it is becoming increasingly difficult for academics to exercise political freedom in their research agendas, it is still possible.

Academic resistance and the exercise of political freedom.

Academics expressed discontent with the current conditions in which they work, particularly in terms of the tied nature of most research funding, the intense pressure to bring in income, the low status given to teaching and the increasingly conservative and/or self interested approach that they saw occurring within their workplaces. It was quite clear that very few participants in my study have been captured by the discourse of the 'enterprise university'. Indeed, my explorations of how interviewees constructed the role of the university indicate that academics are not enamoured of the entrepreneurial model. For some, the 'idea of the university' they subscribe to has little in common with the contemporary identity and practice of the institution in which they work. For example, an academic at one of the Sandstone universities argued:

I think this university should be engaging more. A university like this, obviously it should be engaging ... it should – I mean, for many years this university and people in this university held the government to account. It was about the only institution of sufficient size and clout and weight to enable that calling to account. That's just all stopped and I think that's really quite tragic (Chase, Performative University).

Another example of this dissent was provided in the following exchange with an academic at one of the New universities:

I think the universities are important in the overall scheme of things, for a whole range of reasons. For institutions, I think that there's a lot wrong with universities. I see a need for change in universities that I am not sure that, well I am sure, that the changes that we are seeing at the moment are probably not the ones that I would be hoping for as such. So I see the universities as places of education and as places for the development of knowledge and of consciousness and thought. Places where people can have the freedom to explore their ideas, no matter how subversive, no matter how marginal, as a place where people are allowed the space to be a little bit, to be greatly exploratory and if that involved being a little eccentric, then that is a good thing, I would say. So I see it as a place that embraces diversity, that questions fearlessly, that encourages people to think through the implications and to challenge, politically.

Q: Is that your lived experience at the university?

Well, normally, my lived experience of the university is it's a place of hmm, a place of hard work, daily grind, it's a workplace, it's a very demanding workplace, it's a frustrating workplace. At the university, because I've worked here since 1991, I've had occasional glimpses of that vision of what I would think of as the true university, rather than that being my lived experience (Reagan, Cityside).

Overall, the views expressed by my participants are supported by the research literature on the changing nature of higher education in Australia. A study by Winter and Sorros suggest that concerns about the impact of neo-liberalism on education are wide-spread. Winter and Sorros surveyed academics in eight universities to explore their work attitudes and responses to corporate reforms. In discussing the results, Winter and Sorros noted:

Faced by uncertainty and conflict in their value systems, many academics have become incapable of envisioning their own future and that of their universities. For many academics in this study, corporate reforms are perceived as threatening. Value conflict statements indicate academics feel traditional academic values are being threatened or compromised by corporate reforms. ... In a state of value conflict and stress, academics do not support reforms that base education on the principles of profit and deny the importance of learning, scholarship and creativity³⁵⁵.

A small number of participants in this study have responded to these value conflicts by challenging variously the funding regimes, the change management initiatives or even the recruitment practices. The stone-throwing incident reported in chapter five highlights one academic's exercise of political freedom. Another example comes from one of the Sandstones:

When I first arrived at the School there was an important appointment that was to be made for programme director. One of the potential candidates rang me and said that they were interested and I gave them some information on the school and they then applied and got short-listed and came up and did the interview and all the rest of it but, at the time that this process was going on, there was – it seemed to me – a preferred candidate emerging, who was not the

³⁵⁵ R. Winter & J. Sorros, *Corporate Reforms to Australian Universities: Views from the Academic Heartland*, paper presented at the Critical Management Studies Conference, University of Manchester, England, 11-13 July 2001, p. 17.

candidate who had spoken to me and who on paper was nowhere near the person I had spoken to but nonetheless, it seemed to me that this other person was getting positioned as a better appointment and this was before we had interviewed.

Anyway, I discovered that there was all this stuff going around about the first person, that they were a critical intellectual that had upset some institutions. I would think that would say that'd be something we would embrace and something that we should, in fact, use as a positive rather than a negative but I was a bit disturbed to see the way in which that was twisted as something that would make this candidate suspicious, or that may rock the boat, or may not be like us, or ... so I was concerned about that and raised my objections with the head of school and the dean who was on the committee and said to them you need to give this assurance that it will happen, but, it was asked in a roundabout way but not very directly to this candidate and no surprises – she didn't get the job and the other candidate did.

So, I was in a ... concerned about that, concerned enough - it raised for me a whole lot of policy issues about the effects on selection panels and how most decisions are decided and so I sort of then, at the next staff meeting said, I actually want direction on how we do this because I was not very happy about that and would like some discussion about that and it shifted it a little bit. There is now, a nomination process for one or two of the positions on the selection panels but at the same time, there was a reluctance to have an open discussion about what the issues were because it was seen as opening a can of worms and that was what I was told – we don't want to open a can of worms! (Ashton, Performative University)

One academic at a New University provided an account of a meeting where she had voiced something of the loss she felt in regard to the university being a place of freedom, 'it was like I'd said something wrong, like I had farted in public' (Hunter, Bayside). These overt challenges are certainly not the norm. Most of the resistance reported during interviews is covert and indirect such as the selective adoption of institutional initiatives, ignoring emails, playing dead to avoid a confrontation over a performance appraisal. These are covert and indirect acts of resistance. They serve to distance academics from particular power-effects but do little to confront the disciplinary regimes or the policy intentions that underpin them.

It is important to note that all of the examples provided by my interviewees of challenges or dissent occurred within the institution. In other words, none of the interviewees had exercised their political freedom by *publicly* criticising their

university or the higher education sector in general. The silence of this particular group of academics is congruent with the findings of previous studies that examine academics' responses to the changing conditions of their professional existence³⁵⁶.

In broad terms, social-political critique is not a notable feature of academic activity in Australian universities. Very few respondents in this study could give examples of actions they had taken to engage in or initiate a public debate. When academics do engage in public criticism it usually comes in the form of letters to the editor or presentations at academic conferences. The practice of dissent in public forums was not common.

This raises an important question. How do we account for the lack of political activism by an occupational group which has traditionally prided themselves on their intellect and critical capacities and who have justify their existence by drawing on a discourse of democracy, free speech and a commitment to social change in the name of empowerment? This point is especially pertinent given the explicit discourses on display in contemporary academic social work texts in Australia, As any number of recent texts suggest there is a significant discursive space now inside mainstream social work theory given over to themes of 'empowerment', emancipatory practice' and 'critical theory'³⁵⁷

In my interviews I asked participants whether they thought academics had failed to respond to the significant changes being instigated within universities and if so, why. Most of the participants responded by saying that there had been a lack of engagement, although some pointed to individual academics or groups like the

³⁵⁶ See for example, Gina Anderson, *Playing Their Game: Academic Resistance in the Managerial University study on academic resistance in Australian Universities*, Ph.D Thesis, University of Western Sydney.

³⁵⁷ See for example, B. P Mullaly, *Challenging Oppression: A Critical Approach to Social Work*, Oxford University Press, London, 2002; B. Pease, L. Briskman & J. Allen, *Critical Social Work*, Allen and Unwin, Melbourne, 2003; and B. Pease & J. Fook, (eds) *Transforming social work practice: postmodern critical perspectives*, 4th Edn, Allen and Unwin, Australia, 1999.

Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee to indicate that the Government had been challenged albeit with little effect.

The primary explanation respondents gave as to why they themselves and academics more generally had been silent, was to point to the effect of workloads or what some called the experience of work intensification. Older academics argued that their workloads had increased markedly since when they first joined the sector. They claimed that a lot of this increase in workload was associated with administrative tasks and the demands of teaching. The moves towards a mass higher education system have increased the complexity of administration and the sheer number of administrative tasks that are now undertaken by academics. In addition, the discourse of accountability has, in effect, generated a tidal wave of paperwork as 'quality regimes' require paper trails to document achievements.

The rise in student numbers that has accompanied the massification of universities has also had its effects in terms of increased marking and contact with students. In this regard, a simple comparison of teaching hours over the past twenty years will not shed light on changing workloads. A number of interviewees also indicated that the level of pastoral care that they undertake with their students had increased as had the level of learning support necessary to assist students to achieve academic success. Although some interviewees treated this as a 'dumbing down' of the system, others located this as an institutional problem. In this regard, the point being made was that a more diverse student body has a more diverse level and array of needs, a fact which is not necessarily responded to by university management.

Beyond the issue of workloads, the commercialisation of universities has provided another explanatory theme. The development of new disciplinary codes of conduct and enterprise agreements that forbid employees from 'bringing the university into disrepute' was singled out. In other words, academics are warned against tarnishing the image of their particular 'brand'. From the perspective of my respondents, this has had a chilling effect on the willingness of academics to engage in criticism that might be construed as detrimental to their university. It can be argued that the generality

with which this idea is treated in such policy documents means that the power of attempts to prohibit acts that would bring the university into disrepute lies in their lack of specificity. In effect, academics need to work out themselves what might constitute a breach of contract or an offence.

There is evidence to suggest that academics are likely to be guarded in this climate. Journalist Gideon Haigh wrote a story on the Minsters' vetoing of ARC grants, soliciting information from more than sixty people. In his article, Haigh reflected on his experience:

In general, the response, especially among academics themselves, was either unhelpful or actively fearful. Where academic freedom is concerned, it seems everyone wants to go to heaven, but no one wants to die: astonishment and outrage peter out at the very point where they might be expressed to anyone other than colleagues³⁵⁸.

The practices and reflections of interviewees in this study support Haigh's point. Indeed, a number of respondents expressed a fear of reprisals. As one Gumtree lecturer put at the Gumtree University put it 'academics have mortgages too' (Dakota). Significantly, this respondent concluded her interview by saying 'I hope I don't get the sack'.

This fear of retribution was always justified by accounts of other academics experiences, some of which were drawn from within the particular institution itself, although some came from media accounts of particular incidents. In the eyes of my participants, individual cases matter because they exemplify the current relations of power and freedom within academe and thus serve as a warning to others. Judith Shklar reminds us how destructive of freedom, fear can be 'Systematic fear is the condition that makes freedom impossible, and it is aroused by the expectation of institutionalized cruelty as by nothing else'³⁵⁹.

³⁵⁸ Gideon Haigh, 'The Nelson Touch', *The Monthly*, May, 2006, p. 20

³⁵⁹ J. Shklar, 'The Liberalism of Fear' in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, Nancy Rosenbaum (Ed.), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 21-38.

Interestingly, a number of participants argued that social workers are particularly timorous in the face of conflict and that the professional identity of this group mediates against a sense of collective responsibility and action. The following interview exchange highlights something of the issue. This perspective was provided by someone trained in social work:

Do you hear the schools of social work or the professional association making outcries about what the government is doing? I don't.

Q: Why is that?

Because social workers are wimps! They're interested in promoting the best interests of social work with the assumption being; if that happens, then the best interests of the people who they work with will also be promoted (Chase, Performative University).

It is possible that this would not be a popular or welcomed interpretation by this person's colleagues. However, it does have support in the literature on social work. Olson argues that there is a great discrepancy between what is said and what is done by social workers³⁶⁰. Olson locates this disjunction with social work's enduring efforts to achieve legitimacy as a profession and its related efforts to carve out a core jurisdiction for social work knowledge and practice:

At the profession's heart, social workers are charged to create a just world. However, to the degree that the actions of social workers stem from professionalization and professionalism, this mission is a rhetorical and instrumental device to reproduce the ends of the professional project, competition for turf³⁶¹.

Olson's key argument is that 'social work's organizing value is not social justice, but professionalization and the dominance successful professionalization entails'³⁶². This position is supported by a number of participants involved in an exploratory study

³⁶⁰ J. Olson, *Social Work's Professional and Social Justice Projects: Discourses in Conflict*, <http://ww2.olc.edu/jolson/socialwork/Discoursesarticle.doc>, n.d, viewed 14 October 2006.

³⁶¹ Olson, p. 7.

³⁶² Olson, p. 10

undertaken by Carolyn Noble and Linda Briskman³⁶³. One participant, 'Jo' argued 'There are almost two streams of social work, one which is progressive and radical and the other which is strongly conservative'³⁶⁴. In respect of human rights, another participant contends that "There are thousands of social workers who couldn't give a shit' (Kim)³⁶⁵. These participants argued that the professions' code of ethics needs to be improved³⁶⁶:

The code is too conservative, too rigid and 'something is missing' (Jo).

There is the need for expansion, Social workers don't see themselves sufficiently as change agents and this needs incorporating. There is also a need to incorporate international human rights and to understand diversity (Kim)

William De Maria offers a similar critique of the profession and its code of ethics. De Maria says that 'social workers and other professionals rarely disclose wrongdoing' within institutions³⁶⁷. In addition, De Maria argues that the AASW's code of ethics provides no support for dissenting social workers. On the contrary, the code disenfranchises activist social workers. The current code states:

Social workers should appropriately challenge, and work to improve, policies, procedures, practices and service provisions which:

- Are not in the best interests of clients
- Are inequitable
- Are in any way oppressive, disempowering or culturally appropriate
- Demonstrate unfair discrimination.

³⁶³ C. Noble & L. Briskman, 'Workable ethics: Social work and progressive practice', in *Australian Social Work*, Vol. 51, No. 3, September 1998, pp. 9-15.

³⁶⁴ Cited in Noble & Briskman, 1998, p. 13.

³⁶⁵ Cited in Noble & Briskman, 1998, p. 13.

³⁶⁶ Cited in Noble & Briskman, 1998, p.13.

³⁶⁷ W. De Maria, 'Flapping on Clipped Wings: Social Work Ethics in the age of Activism', in *Australian Social Work*, Vol. 50, No. 4, December 1997, p. 3.

When policies or procedures of employing bodies contravene professional standards, social workers should endeavour to effect change through consultation, using appropriate organizational channels³⁶⁸.

De Maria states that ‘the code appears to be an appropriate piece of sanctimony for those who practice safely in the system affirming modalities...’³⁶⁹ De Maria further argues that the code ‘fails to acknowledge the increasingly despotic industrial atmosphere in which social workers toil’³⁷⁰.

In my interviews many of the academic social workers gave at best qualified support for the exercise of political freedom both within and beyond the university. For many, it all depends on how it is done. This suggests that there is a ‘will to propriety’ at play here that constructs some forms of activism as ‘appropriate’ and others as ‘inappropriate’ or ‘unprofessional’. This ‘will to propriety’ is a technology of self-control that can mediate against the exercise of academic freedom. In this regard, being proper and being complicit may be one and the same thing.

Beyond the issues of professionalism and propriety, the relative silence of academics is perhaps best explained by the excessive individualism of academics and academic work. As one interviewee put it:

I think people don’t understand academics – academics are lone rangers, largely. If you look at the experience of the union here, the degree of unionisation is not high and it’s dropping and if you go to union meetings, you’d be lucky if you got 50 people out of a staff of thousands. I have sat on picket lines and watched academics happily cross them – the whole notion that this is a unionised workplace with a sense of collective responsibility to each other totally mistakes the actual reality. The reality is that most academics are very individualistic, quite self oriented, the workplace exacerbates that ...

Q: In what way?

³⁶⁸ Australian Association of Social Workers, *AASW Code of Ethics*, [http://www.aasw.asn.au/adobe/about/AASW Code of Ethics-2004.pdf](http://www.aasw.asn.au/adobe/about/AASW_Code_of_Ethics-2004.pdf), 1999, p. 19, viewed 14 December 2006.

³⁶⁹ De Maria, 1997, p. 6.

³⁷⁰ De Maria, 1997, p. 12.

Because it rewards you for individual achievement. It doesn't reward you for any collective achievement – it doesn't, in fact, if you are a team player, then you're a fool, really. If you run round doing things for other people there's no reward in it for you and the people who get promoted are not the people who are team players (Chase, Performative University).

As another academic put it, academia is largely the realm of middle-class, white collar workers who have a self perception of being autonomous professionals rather than an industry that that is embroiled in employer/employee power relations:

... the management of academic institutions and the government have been able to take advantage of that. Even if they've had staff associations in the past, they have not been an effective unionised body for looking after their own collective interests, and they're very easy to split. I think a lot of academics played the game of, oh, well, we'll accept these cuts as long as you look after my area, and preserve my area, so I don't think academics have exercised a lot of solidarity – haven't seen a common interest (Quinn, Bayside).

There can be no doubt that the discourse of individualism and the dividing practices of governments and of university managers militates against the development of a collective consciousness and social action that may arise from that. However, the way in which academics constitute their freedom is a problem in its own right. Some academics define the management of academic activity as an issue of accountability rather than freedom. The following excerpt from an interview with a Sandstone academic makes this point.

Q: Since you began your academic career what changes have you experienced in relation to your freedom?

There are much greater expectations in terms of research productivity. I think the academic work that people do is much more constrained, not the freedom to think but the academic work is much more constrained and we are expected to be much more accountable. We expect people to reach certain standards in terms of their publications and their applications for grants, so I think academic work is much more ... there is much less flexibility in that you just can't decide what you're going to do and do it and there's a lot more accountability (Kasey, Traditional University).

This disassociation of regulatory practices from the issue of freedom is supported by the literature. Having undertaken research on the changing nature of academic work in Australian universities, Vidovich and Currie contend that, among their respondents, 'increased accountability was experienced more often than reduced autonomy, suggesting that not all academics perceive a direct relationship between the two'³⁷¹. By locating power relations within a discourse of accountability, managers are able to construct those who would challenge these kinds of initiatives as irresponsible i.e. not wanting to be accountable for their actions. This has a potentially quite chilling effect on would-be dissenters.

Indeed, for the majority of participants in this study construct academic freedom continues to be defined negatively as the absence of interference. Therefore, not having experienced any direct repression they can understand themselves to be free. This is despite the fact that the conditions of their institutional existence have changed markedly from when many of them first got work in a university. This would suggest that the way that participants think about power and freedom-as freedom from explicitly repressive practices- can limit their ability to speak about what is happening in their workplaces in these terms.

In addition, many participants seemed quite willing to restrict their own freedoms by arguing that an academic's right to speak was limited by their area of expertise. Thus, if a public intervention falls outside one's supposed area of expertise and it somehow brings the university into disrepute, then many of my interviewees believe that the university has the right to discipline that person. In line with this logic, only academics that are acknowledged experts in the field of higher education have a mandate or right to speak on these issues. One person took this position further arguing:

I have very strong opinions on our detention policy, our immigration policy and things like that but I don't believe that I have the expertise that some other

³⁷¹ L.Vidovich,& J. Currie, 'Changing Accountability and Autonomy at the "Coalface" of Academic Work in Australia' in J, Currie & J. Newson, *Universities and Globalisation: Critical Perspectives*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 1998, p. 206.

people have to talk about, for example, the mental health effects of detention and things, so while I follow the debate closely and I contribute as a citizen, I *don't believe that I have a right to engage in a debate where I know that there are people that are more informed than me* (Kasey, Traditional University).

This convention has a long history, gaining particular prominence in the post-war era of the research university where the discourse of expertise gained great purchase. However, it is problematic on a number of counts. Firstly, it has to be said claims to expertise provide a weak form of protection for academic freedom. In the current climate there is doubt as to how narrowly academics' supposed field of expertise will be defined and the extent to which vice-chancellors are prepared to stick their neck out to support controversial academics. To my knowledge, only one Australian university (Macquarie) has initiated an institutional-wide discussion on this issue or made any specific commitments to free speech within the university. Some institutional enterprise bargaining agreements gesture towards a commitment but the vagueness of these renders them almost useless as a form of protection.

Secondly, this stance provides an all too convenient alibi in that it absolves academics from taken any responsibility for what happens within their institution or speaking out on social arrangements that are harmful, unethical or unjust. In effect, this standpoint encourages academics to be spectators of their own and others experience.

Finally, any approach which makes free speech contingent on the possession of expert knowledge privileges 'scientific rationality' in public affairs. In so doing, it legitimates a hierarchy of speaking positions thereby enacting a form of foreclosure which leaves many voices marginalised and thus silent. This point was made by Ashis Nandy who contends:

As more and more areas of life are 'scientized' and taken out of the reach of participatory politics to be handed over to experts, the universities as the final depository of expertise have become a major global political actor of our

times. In addition to their other tasks, they legitimize the 'expertization' of public affairs and the reign of the professionals³⁷².

Viewed in this light, the linking of the practice of academic freedom to expertise – by university leaders and individual academics – can be understood as detrimental to the political freedom of not only of academics themselves but also to the wider public space long defended by writers from Voltaire to Habermas.

Most of my participants believed that socio-political criticism and community engagement were, at best, practices that they ought to be allowed to engage in – if they so choose – rather than an obligation or duty that arises out of the privileges and opportunities that come with an academic position. This may well entitle Graeme Moodie to suggest that the notion of academic freedom is 'less an important public principle than a slogan recited in defence of a sectional interest'³⁷³.

Chapter Summary

Social work academics often espouse the rhetoric of social justice and position their's as a profession of change agents. The discussion in this chapter casts doubt over the extent to which social work academics are ready, willing and able to live up to the rhetoric they speak. Much of the academic practice undertaken by academics in this study conforms to that which you would expect of an academic in any discipline; presentations at conferences, publication in refereed journal and membership of professional associations. Some of my participants perform governance roles as board-members of non-government or community organisations. Very few undertook academic activities that were unconventional in some way.

³⁷² Ashis Nandy, 'Recovery of Indigenous Knowledge and Dissenting Futures of the University', in Sohail Inayatullah and Jennifer Gidley (eds.), *The University in Transformation: Global Perspectives on the Futures of the University*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 2000, p.116.

³⁷³ Graeme C. Moodie, 'On Justifying the Different Claims to Academic Freedom', *Minerva*, 1996, Vol. 34, p. 129.

In regard to challenging the academic milieu in which they find themselves, a small minority of my interviewees have engaged in overt dissent. Much of the resistance is covert and passive. This can sometimes avoid the worst excesses of managerialism within the university but it does very little in terms of challenging the normative regulatory frameworks that now pervade Australian universities. The accounts of academics in this study suggest that silence is a common response to the regimes of power that are shaping the practice of freedom within the academe.

Educators now face the daunting challenge of creating new discourses, pedagogical practices, and collective strategies that will offer students and others the hope and tools necessary to revive the culture of politics as an ethical response to the demise of democratic public life. Such a challenge demands that we struggle to keep alive those institutional spaces, forums and public spheres that support and defend critical education; help students come to terms with their own power as individuals and social agents; provide the pedagogical conditions for students to learn how to take risks; exercise civic courage; and engage in teaching and research that is socially responsible whilst refusing to surrender our knowledge and skills to the highest bidder³⁷⁴

Chapter Eight: Tying the Threads: Academic Freedom and the Prospects for Public Scholarship in Contemporary Australian Universities

In the introduction to this thesis I argued that universities are important public institutions that should foster and engage in scholarship oriented to the public interest. There is a long and distinguished roll call of writers who have argued that intellectuals and academics need to think critically about the world and their own knowledge production activities³⁷⁵. They should also be using their capacities as social agents to intervene in public life, to confront the social arrangements, practices and ideas that condition their own existence and the existence of others.

In this regard the university is public space that sits between the sphere of government and the private sphere. It is a space of initiatory action which, at its best, enables new ideas, practices and arrangements to be heard, debated and acted upon. Its key purpose is to enable public discourse on the limits and possibilities of human action. In contrast to its legislative and private counterparts, the university is not a site of adjudication. In this regard, it is not oriented towards closure. Rather,

³⁷⁴ H. Giroux & S Searles Giroux, *Take Back Higher Education: Race, Youth and the Crises of Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Era*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2004, p. 9.

³⁷⁵ This 'roll call' would include such luminaries as Henry Giroux, Pierre Bourdieu, Edward Said, John Dewey, Michel Foucault, Paolo Friere, Maxine Greene and Martha Nussbaum among others.

universities should manifest an enduring ethos of openness in practice and intent. On this basis, properly functioning public universities are internally democratic and externally relevant – socially, politically, culturally, environmentally and economically. With this in mind, I bring the threads of this project together to identify the contemporary conditions that form the limits of academic freedom and relate these to the prospects for public scholarship within Australian universities. The last section of this chapter and thus the thesis is focussed on the future.

Power relations in Australian universities

A number of academics within this study would say that they have academic freedom. By this they mean that they are not actively prevented from doing anything. This reflects their narrow understanding of what constitutes a freedom-shaping exercise of power. The reality is that successive governments since the late 1980s have set out to redefine the role of universities by constructing them as economic entities. As the lived experience of academics interviewed for this study suggests, this is no longer a mere aspiration – it has, to a large extent, been accomplished. In effect, the policy discourse of higher education as an industry has constituted the achievement of competitive advantage as the primary goal of universities. Within this world view, universities are successful when they beat other universities for funding and when they contribute to the economic competitiveness of the nation in terms of attracting investment to Australia. They are also successful when they enable individual entities – students and corporations – to be competitive in their respective markets. In this regard the emergence of the so-called enterprise university has narrowed the definition of utility and depoliticised key collective norms within and across higher education institutions. The privilege given to income generation is both pervasive and largely uncontested.

Increasingly, the value of academic activity is judged according to its attractiveness to ‘external stakeholders’ beginning with governments. In this regard a consumerist ethic displaces a broader public ethic in the delivery of courses and the formulation of

research. Commercial considerations and concerns for competitive advantage underpin both the institutional-wide policy framework in which universities operate and the judgments made about the value of academic disciplines, academic work and individual performance. They also underpin academic decision-making in terms of how they spend their time and where they direct their efforts. All of the universities examined in this study are making policies designed to reward a thorough-going careerism that manifests servitude to consumers, niche-markets and income generating partnerships. Although the intensity of this discourse varies between universities, as does the degree to which academics embrace this entrepreneurial identity, it is quite clear that increasingly fewer academics are going to achieve promotion on the basis of their political engagements, community service or teaching prowess alone.

In effect, contemporary power relations manifest a form of economism which has set loose a homogenizing effect on academia. Academics are urged to find ways to link their work with cashed-up stakeholders. This was a feature of every setting explored as part of this study. Indeed, university vice-chancellors routinely construct their institutions as a brand and much of the communication that emanates from the leadership of their institution is focussed on competition and the university's position in the market. Thus, although the rhetoric of 'excellence' abounds, governments and many institutional leaders have lost sight of the fact that 'universities do not exist to make a profit'³⁷⁶.

The relationship between a university and its environment can significantly shape the practices that occur within it. In Australia, the Government maintains a one size fits all approach to funding and accountability. Given that all universities orientate themselves to getting the most out of these arrangements; this encourages homogeneity in the higher education sector. Differently situated universities seek to

³⁷⁶ M. Gallagher, 'Reversing the Slide', *Australian Universities Review*, Vol. 48, No. 1, 2005, p. 14, 2005. It is important to note that this is the same Michael Gallagher who wrote the paper entitled *The emergence of Entrepreneurial Public Universities in Australia*, referred to in Chapter One (see pages 46-47).

emulate those who are deemed to epitomize success and as Marginson & Considine argue, those that are themselves 'successful' seek to mimic international institutions that are held in high esteem³⁷⁷.

This mimetic process translates into a hierarchy of academic activity that pays little heed to institutional or individual differences in terms of desires, goals or opportunities. ARC Discovery grants are the cream of the crop, then publications in peer-review journals, then comes teaching and then finally there is service to the university and the community. The findings of this research suggest that the only variability is where contract research funding fits within the hierarchy and the extent to which outcomes like ARC grants are constructed as essential rather than desirable. It must be said that this hierarchy of academic activity is not entirely new. Research grants and publications have long been a key source of esteem for institutions and academics alike. Indeed, universities in Australia are by definition, research institutions. Grants and publications have been the currency of academic status for a long time. Despite this longevity, the old adage of 'publish or perish' has now got a firmer basis in reality than it has ever had previously. In contemporary times, to perish is more likely to mean not having your appointment confirmed/contract extended rather than just fading into academic obscurity.

The findings of this research suggest that early-career academics bear the brunt of institutional power relations designed to extract valuable work from all staff. Probation periods provide an opportunity for institutions to impose normative regulation that disciplines the academic to perform in relation to institutional priorities. In this regard, early career academics are encouraged to monitor the extent to which their activities align with organizational goals. Longer term academics are better positioned to resist attempts to govern their activity. However, they are not entirely immune. Regimes associated with academic promotion encourage establish

³⁷⁷ S. Marginson & M. Considine, *The Enterprise University: Power, Governance and Reinvention in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000.

academics to 'play the game'. In effect, probation periods and performance appraisal in general, act to create what Stinchcombe calls a 'community of fate'. Nearly half a century ago Stinchcombe observed that:

... either through psychological mechanisms like identification or through reward systems, an aggregate becomes a group to the degree that damage to the collectivity (or its members) is "bad" for the individual, and success of the collectivity is "good". But an organization differs from other communities of fate in that it is deliberately designed to reward people in such a way that they are better off if some specialized purpose is achieved, and worse off (punished, wages lowered, careers cut off, or honor besmirched) if the purpose is not achieved³⁷⁸.

The interdependence between academics and their institutions is not new. However, the intensely individualized stories that have historically been told about academic work have obscured this interdependence as has the 'community of scholars' discourse which privileged discipline-based relations and identities over institutional connections. Academics understood themselves to have more in common with academics from the same discipline in other universities than with those from different disciplines within their own university.

In the era of the 'Enterprise University', academics are encouraged to identify and associate with members of their own institution. They are also encouraged to understand their fate as being dependent upon the fate of the university and vice versa. In this regard, academics are urged to align their own research interests to that of others within the discipline group in order to construct research teams and a concentration of expertise that can be used to attract funding. These outcomes reflect institutional priorities that are warranted by an enduring discourse of financial viability and a Darwinist logic which heightens the sense of competition and normalizes the idea that species (discipline/department/school) survival depends on

³⁷⁸ A. L. Stinchcombe, 'Social structure and organizations', in J.G. March (ed) *Handbook of Organisation*, Rand McNally & Company, Chicago, 1965, pp. 142-93.

successful adaptation to the environment. This plays out in appraisal/promotions schemes that valorise collaboration and profitable outcomes.

The discourse of a 'community of fate' is also evident in the growing presence of contract clauses which promise disciplinary action for any conduct likely to bring the university into 'disrepute'. If the university's honour is seen to have been besmirched by the actions of an academic the university will 'return the favour'. The majority of my participants were conscious that their university expects them to conduct their scholarly activities in ways that generate income or at the very least maintain 'investor' satisfaction. The mantra of 'don't bite the hand that feeds you' reverberates through the corridors of Australian universities. This invokes a 'common-sense' rationality that warrants conformism and encourages a passive acceptance of normative regulation.

Despite a growing tendency towards institutional isomorphism, the intensity of normative power relations differs markedly between institutional settings. Universities that are attempting to infuse the entire academic culture with an entrepreneurial mindset are more authoritarian than those who are concentrating their entrepreneurialism within discrete functional units. In other words there are differences in terms of the value placed on competition, academic entrepreneurialism and the exercise of managerial prerogative. In this regard, the ambitions and desires of university leaders matter in terms of academic freedom and the nature of academic activity within a given university setting. Contrary to the 'survival' discourse that permeates different institutions and the broader literature; it is not the cash-starved universities that are whole-heartedly embracing the enterprise ethos. One of the Sandstone universities was a standout in this regard.

The surveillance of academics within the Performative University is intense. At each performance review interview academics from this institution have to account for their existence in terms of how they have value-added to the organization during the past year. This contrasts quite markedly with one of the New universities where

performance appraisal is supposedly compulsory but most academics simply refuse to do them. This is not to say that academics at New universities are freer than colleagues in other institutional types. New universities suffer from a lack of opportunities. This means that while the normative regulation might be less intense, so the prospects for positive freedom (in the form of institutional supports) are also less evident. Either way, the effect is still the same in that the conditions of academic work within these institutions limits the prospects for particular forms of scholarly engagement and thus constrain the way in which academics can exercise their freedom.

The privilege given to economic instrumentalism can be associated with the ascendancy of neo-liberalism as a discursive framework much of which is influencing public policy making. Henry and Susan Giroux argue that under the auspices of neo-liberalism ‘the idea of the public sphere is equated with a predatory space, rife with danger or disease - as with “public” restrooms, “public” transportation and ... “public schools”³⁷⁹. Neo-liberalism aims to bring about ‘a fundamental and political redefinition of the social value of public services in general, and of universities and education in particular’³⁸⁰. Neo-liberalism diminishes the value of a public language around education and the role of universities and the purchase that such a language might achieve within a polity. The term ‘public’ becomes pejorative³⁸¹. This enables the boundaries between corporate culture and public culture to be blurred ‘as universities rush to embrace the logic of industrial management while simultaneously forfeiting those broader values central to a democracy and capable of limiting the excesses of corporate power’³⁸². Masao Miyoshi argues that universities have always had ties with industry. In this regard, the effect of neo-liberalism is ‘not a fundamental or abrupt change perhaps, but still an unmistakable radical reduction of

³⁷⁹ H. Giroux & S. Searles Giroux, *Take Back Higher Education: Race, Youth and the Crises of Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Era*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2004, p. 224.

³⁸⁰ Samuel Weber, cited in H. Giroux & S. Giroux, p. 225.

³⁸¹ Giroux & Searles Giroux, 2004, 225.

³⁸² Giroux & Searles Giroux, 2004, 225.

its public and critical role³⁸³. The experiences of academics interviewed for this study lend support to these claims.

Commentators often use the term 'steering from a distance' to characterise neo-liberal approaches to government. Lesley Vidovich argues that 'Steering at a distance' involves the simultaneous but contradictory changes which characterise the New Right ideology towards de-regulation, decentralisation and devolution on the one hand, yet greater centralisation and government intervention on the other³⁸⁴. Using the definitions of autonomy articulated by Berdahl and McConnell³⁸⁵, Vidovich argues that 'the policy mechanism of steering at a distance involves institutions gaining procedural autonomy (over processes) but losing substantive autonomy (over goals)',³⁸⁶.

'Steering at a distance' does not mean the withdrawal of government from university activities or indeed the lessening of control by governments. Rather, it manifests a different form of governance that facilitates an advance of government control, albeit in a more covert manner. The arrangement for research funding exemplifies something of these tendencies. The government has clawed back institutional research funding and placed it within a competitive regime administered by the ARC. At the same time, the Government has also sought to specify what constitutes research in the national interest nominating research priority areas. In this regard, the metaphor of 'steering from a distance' captures something of the contemporary experience. However, its use can obscure other power relations that are more direct and prohibitive. For example, the Howard government now inspects all workplace agreements to ensure that they comply with its own protocols on industrial relations.

³⁸³ M. Miyoshi, 'Globalisation, Culture and the University' in Frederic Jameson and Masao Miyoshi, eds *The Cultures of Globalisation*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1998, p. 263.

³⁸⁴ L. Vidovich, 'Globalising and Localising Quality Policy in Australia', paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education, Annual Conference 1999.

³⁸⁵ R. O. Berdahl & T. R. McConnell 'Autonomy and accountability: Some fundamental issues'. In P. G. Altbach, R. O. Berdahl, & P. J. Gumpert (Eds.), *Higher education in American society*, Prometheus Books, New York, 1994, pp. 55-72.

³⁸⁶ Vidovich, 1999, p. 5.

Non-compliance results in a funding sanction. There is nothing subtle, sophisticated or remote about these arrangements.

There is also nothing subtle about the Government's attempts to police the construction of knowledge within this country. In 2004 and 2005, the then Minister for Education, Science and Technology, Dr Brendan Nelson vetoed a total of nine research projects that had been through an extensive peer review process and recommended for funding by the ARC. There can be no doubt that the Minister acted within his lawful authority in deciding to veto particular research projects. However, what is disturbing is the fact that he has not been held accountable for his actions in that he has never released details as to which projects were vetoed or the basis upon which the decision was made. Even the academics whose projects were vetoed by the Minister have not been told that this was the case. These researchers learned that they were unsuccessful in the same manner as applicants whose projects did not rank high enough to be recommended for funding. Therefore, as far as they know, their project did not make it past the peer review process³⁸⁷.

At the very least we can say that the practice of Ministerial veto and the secrecy that surrounds it, denies ARC applicants the right to due process. People who are subject to an adverse decision by Government ought to know that this has occurred. A number of individuals and groups have publicly criticised the Minister's actions. The Vice-chancellor of the University of Western Australia argued that for the benefit of future applicants, the Minister should disclose details of the vetos and provide a rationale for his decision making³⁸⁸. The executive director of the Academy of the Humanities, John Bryon argued that the ministerial veto of research projects set a dangerous precedent, 'It's a slippery slope,' he said "all manner of publicly valuable but politically sensitive research could be de-funded"³⁸⁹. The Ministers actions have also

³⁸⁷ I have in-depth personal knowledge of these events. I have made application to access these documents under the *Federal Freedom of Information Act 1992*. This application is currently being contested in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

³⁸⁸ A. Robson, 'Please Disclose', *Australian Financial Review*, 22 November 2005, p. 65

³⁸⁹ S. Morris, 'Veto alarms academics', *Australian Financial Review*, 14 November 2005, p. 29.

been criticised by John Mullarvey, the CEO of the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee and the ex-CEO of the ARC, Vicki Sara³⁹⁰. Gideon Haigh contends that Ministerial ego is to blame for these actions.³⁹¹ Regardless of the cause, the growing instance of Ministerial interference does nothing to alleviate concerns that the government policing knowledge and marginalising its critics.

Government action has been important in other ways. The increased intensity of normative regulation has, to a large extent, been facilitated by decreases in public funding. In the name of increased entrepreneurialism, productivity and efficiency, universities have been increasingly 'weaned off' the public purse over the past thirty years with significant reductions in the amount of direct government investment and changes to the way that funding allocations are made. A significant proportion of university funding is now discretionary and conditional rather than secure and untied.

Without doubt, the sector was hit especially hard by funding reductions when the Howard Government took office. However, decreases in public sector funding per university student are not new. Indeed, 2006 marks the 30th consecutive year that the level of public sector commitment (per student) has fallen³⁹². In this regard, the highpoint for public expenditure per student was 1976/77 and successive Governments on both sides of the major party divide have sort to retreat from this position. In effect, successive governments have encouraged universities to construct virtues out of necessity. Within this context, complicity and acquiescence is reframed as responsible financial management. From the perspective of the middle managers interviewed in this study, non-conformism is a luxury they can ill afford.

³⁹⁰ D. Illing, 'ARC fear feeds on Nelson's silence', *The Australian*, 23 November 2005, p. 25.

³⁹¹ Gideon Haigh, 'The Nelson Touch', *The Monthly*, May, 2006.

³⁹² G. Davis, *Do Public Universities Have a Future*, paper presented to the Association for the Public University Forum, Reclaiming the Public in the Public University, Melbourne, 29 April 2006.

The reduction in public sector funding has encouraged an increased focus on tied research money in terms of consultancies and/or contract research. For discipline areas such as social work, the key contractor for research funds is state and federal government departments or large non-profit organizations who channel money from these sources. As indicated previously, the acceptance of tied research money incorporates a risk of censorship. A number of academics within this study have experienced subtle and overt attempts to control their activities. These findings are congruent with the results of a study by Grant Harman on the impacts of a more commercial/entrepreneurial environment on the activities of Australian social scientists³⁹³.

Harman analysed the results of a questionnaire distributed to 853 academics working in traditional social science disciplines or professionally orientated departments that draw largely on social science theory. The survey examined sources of research funding and academics experiences with external funding providers. Harman's findings indicate that social scientists are more likely to access tied research funding through government agencies than ARC funding, despite misgivings that university entrepreneurialism threatens academic values. Harman also notes that 30 per cent of researchers who had engaged in this type of research reported 'difficulties with intellectual property issues and with publication of their report',³⁹⁴

Even if we could be assured that the government agency contracting the research is not going to try and influence or suppress what it views as unpalatable findings, the purchase-provider relationship that underpins contract research means that it is the government agencies themselves that will determine what should be researched and quite possibly, how the research should be conducted. In and of itself, this may not be problematic. However, the Governments tying of much ARC research funding to designated research priorities means that the 'pressing problems of the day' are

³⁹³ G. Harman, 'Australian social scientists and transition to a more commercial university environment' in *Higher Education Research and Development*, Vol. 24, No1, February 2005, pp. 79-94.

³⁹⁴ Harman, 2005, p.92.

limited to a significant degree, to those which the governments, state or federal, define as important. Thus, although one of the research priority areas incorporates a goal of 'strengthening Australia's social and economic fabric' the document that details these priority areas specifically states that this goal 'supports the Government's welfare reform and participation agendas'. This is an act of agenda setting that clearly points to the current welfare to work policy framework of the Howard Government.

In effect, the increasing incidence of tied or designated funding has a lot of potential to limit the scope of research that is undertaken, thereby reducing the prospects for public scholarship into problems that are neglected by governments for political or ideological reasons. This is not an issue of repression but it must still count as an exercise of power which is increasingly constraining the conditions of academic work. When coupled with performance and reward systems that unerringly privilege the ability to attract research funding in general, and ARC & NHMRC grants in particular, the significance of this issue begins to show itself. As things stand, it is not in an academic's best interest to pursue funding for projects that governments or industry do not want done. We have shifted from an older university culture that privileged the power of producer-interests to one that privileges the interest of cashed-up consumers. As one participant put it, 'the whole commercialisation emphasis has caused a narrowing of research' (Drew, Performative University).

Within this context, it is not fanciful to suggest that the research conducted by academics is being 'domesticated' in line with the sensitivities of institutions that provide research funding. Although this is often constructed positively in terms of the increased 'usefulness' of academic activity – particularly to industry – the imperative to make decisions that are appealing to funding providers, impacts negatively on what it is possible to say publicly. Of course, academics can still offer commentary on contemporary events, practices or arrangements but without empirical research to back them up this can easily be dismissed as anecdotal. Overall, the perceptions and experiences of academics interviewed for this study suggest that the winning of research grants and the conversion of these into 'desirable' publications has become an

end in and of itself. The significance of the research in terms of its contribution to democratic politics or the amelioration of adverse social conditions is immaterial to those who would evaluate an academics performance.

Beyond the question of censorship, the prospects for public scholarship are further diminished by the growing expectation that research topics will be 'internationally relevant'. This expectation is being articulated within university promotions and appraisal schemes. It has also been inserted into the rules that govern the distribution of research funding through the ARC's Discovery program. The emphasis given to academic activity that has international salience mediates against research projects that have a local focus. Thus despite the enduring rhetoric that exhorts universities, particularly those outside of capital cities, to engage in scholarship that addresses local issues, the rules that regulate the distributions of funding, financial rewards and esteem are actively working against this.

Academics from New universities like Bayside and Countryside raised this as a particular concern. Funding scarcity makes locally-based research more feasible, yet the difficulty in publishing research that does not necessarily have national or international significance creates a problem. In effect, academics face the choice of imposing a nationally significant research agenda onto the local community or committing time into a research project that places them at odds with the rewards schemes enacted within their institution. A number of academics have decided not to participate in promotions processes in order to minimise the degree to which they are subject to normative regulation within their institution. In my view, it is entirely disingenuous for Government Ministers and university leaders to espouse local responsiveness when the 'one-size-fits-all' model of resource allocation privileges academic work that is directed towards the international arena.

It is important to note that the privilege given to publications as a highly valued academic output is not new. The act of publication has been part of the professional identity of academics since well before the emergence of the so-called 'enterprise university'. In this regard, the privileged audience for academic publications has been

the discipline-based 'community of scholars'. In other words, the impact of an academics contribution has, for a long time, been judged by the acclaim that it attracts from other academics. Indeed, the privileging of publications is so taken for granted that only one of my participants constructed the activities of editorial boards as a potential threat to the freedom of academics. As Brian Martin has argued:

Editors not only have enormous power, but they seldom are subject to peer review themselves. Some of them keep their positions for decades. Potential authors may complain privately about inconsistencies and bias, but they are seldom willing to say anything openly. Their fear is that if they did, they would be discriminated against. As in the case of other types of suppression, the fear of stepping out of line has a much greater effect than the few attacks on dissidents that do occur³⁹⁵.

Martin has spent a large part of his career documenting the suppression of unfashionable ideas and research. This is important work. However, an equally pressing problem is the insularity that results from the privileging of peer-reviewed publications. Rather than promoting public accessibility of research, the emergence of the so-called enterprise university has exacerbated the exclusivity of academic knowledge dissemination. Gray et al contend that academic journals are 'one of a number of vehicles through which scholarship can be disseminated'³⁹⁶. Other forms of publication include blogs or web-casts on the internet, submissions to popular journals, newspapers, government inquiries, textbooks and discussion papers. None of these attract a payment from DEST, yet they all have the potential to renew disciplinary knowledge and to test the robustness of contemporary academic understandings. They also have the potential to start a public conversation in regard to our values, beliefs and practices within and beyond the university walls.

³⁹⁵ B. Martin, *Peer-Review as Scholarly Conformity*

<http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/dissent/documents/ss/ss5.html>, viewed 30 March 2006.

³⁹⁶ R. Grey, J. Guthrie & L. Parker, 'Rites of Passage and the self-immolation of academic accounting labour: an essay exploring exclusivity versus mutuality in accounting scholarship', in *Accounting Forum*, Vol. 26, No. 1, March, 2002, p. 12.

The focus on refereed academic journals ‘opts for a particularly constricted definition of knowledge dissemination’ to the detriment of students, the broader public, individual academics and academic disciplines in general³⁹⁷. As a case in point, DEST’s policy operative between 2003-07 does not recognise textbooks. This is nonsense in that textbooks can change the way that academics and students construct their world, their inquiries and their practice. In vocational courses such as social work, text books can link the academic world with the world of professional activity. A text book on field education for social workers can bridge the gap between student preparation and professional practice by exploring the limits and possibilities of social work placements. However, as one of my participants experienced, the writing of practice-related texts is negatively constructed in the hierarchy of academic knowledge dissemination. It does not attract funding and therefore isn’t given much weight as an achievement in annual performance reviews. The narrow-mindedness of DEST in terms of the definition of an appropriate act of knowledge dissemination is ironic given the Government’s reformist desire to breakdown the walls of the ivory tower.

If some forms of publication are devalued within the current regime, face to face dissemination is not even considered. In this regard, the practices of recognition and reward within Australian universities place little or no importance on academic participation in community events or public forums. In an era of the so-called knowledge society, actual inter-personal engagement with publics beyond the university walls is a problem. As an activity, public engagement is not overly measurable, calculable, or readily tradeable. My research suggests that at best, a small amount of this kind of activity is encouraged so as to boost the public profile of the particular academic or the university itself. At worst, it is unthinkable.

Indeed, the primary forum at which academics speak is conferences and, of course, these are mostly attended by other academics and professional and managerial elites from the field. Although this is a long-standing practice, the rise of an entrepreneurial

³⁹⁷ R. Grey, J. Guthrie & L. Parker, 2002, p. 13.

ethos within Australian universities has, arguably, made academic conferences even more insular. Indeed, the pervasiveness of the user-pays principle means that conferences are now seen as an income generating initiatives in their own right so that even this form of engagement is regulated by considerations of cost and the likelihood of the proceedings being published in a format that attracts a payment by the government. This issue was put in stark terms by an academic at one of the New universities:

There is a shortage of money at our university for academics to go and give papers at conferences, so that if – it doesn't matter what conference, whether it is in Canada or Melbourne or Brisbane or Sydney you can apply once a year to the school and get \$300 to help you so that's a limitation on your freedom because you somehow have to fund the rest of the trip yourself. There's a conference that's being run within our university that's very useful to the work that I'm doing with the [x project] and ... I'd be very fascinated to go. I phoned up and asked about it and the registration alone is \$1000. This is for a 3 day conference, now I can't afford to spend a thousand dollars going to a 3 day conference. There is no way that is value for money and it makes me angry because that really does run counter to what I see is the inclusiveness that is necessary. What we're going to get at that conference is a little talk fest of people who can afford a thousand dollars for a conference. They are not going to have a diversity of views. They will go away and feel very comfortable because they got together with like minded people and talked about things they agreed about. You know, there might be a little challenge here and there but to me that's a culture or something at a systems level that really runs counter to how I see academic freedom.

Q: What is that culture, what is that about?

Well, I guess it's the culture of privilege, really. It's a culture that doesn't even think that some people with something valuable to contribute may not be able to afford \$1000 for a 3 day conference. It's the sort of culture of privilege that I think occurs within some political parties where people mix only with people like themselves and don't have any clue of what it means to be unemployed or homeless because its never happened to them, its never happened to anyone that they've known and if it did happen briefly to somebody in their circle, there are so problem in the way that it is for the people that cop that sort of thing on a regular basis (Reagan, Cityside).

At work here is a power relation that enables select people to participate whilst excluding others. These arrangements reproduce existing inequalities and minimize the prospects for dissent. While alternative views are not explicitly censored, the effect is the same in that the cost hurdle restricts access to a space where problems are being identified and possible solutions discussed.

Although the preceding discussion has focussed on research, contemporary conditions are also making teaching increasingly problematic. Standard course outlines are becoming increasingly common and teaching practice is evaluated in relation to a number of key quantifiable measures including 'staff-student ratios; progression of students; graduate employment rates; and student evaluation scores for each subject'. The story that is currently constructed in relation to teaching is contradictory. On one hand, universities are giving more emphasis to academics getting good ratings on student evaluations, whilst on the other the message is clear that teaching prowess is not highly valued within promotion and appraisal exercises. From the perspective of most of my participants teaching is the bread and butter of an academic's job yet it attracts little kudos. Academics are encouraged to invest enough time so that students don't complain or give poor evaluations, but not so much time that the individual academic is unable to make a contribution in terms of publications, grants or service to the university.

Although most academics contended that teaching does not get the recognition it deserves, they also articulate support for some of the changes that have been introduced and the increased monitoring of teaching practice. In this regard, the Howard Government's reform agenda is viewed as addressing past abuses of the system in terms of inappropriate relations between staff and students as well as academic neglect of students' needs and rights. However, the majority of participants in this study constructed the discourse of the student-as-customer is problematic in its own right believing that it encourages a narrow focus on the economic utility of a degree program to the detriment of other purposes such as democratic education and the development of a critical-inquiring disposition.

From the academic perspective, the students are increasingly assuming a consumerist identity and demanding that they be treated like customers. Participants expressed anxiety about the ways in which students would deploy the discourse of customer service, particularly in terms of the increased likelihood of student complaints. Exploration of this issue during interviews suggest that the fear emanates more from a lack of trust in terms of how well the institution will respond to these issues and there is a concern that academics won't be given a right of reply. In other words, academics expressed fear that they will be guilty until proved innocent.

The findings of this research suggest that academics are concerned that some subjects could, in effect, be a poisoned chalice in that students fundamentally dislike having to learn particular topics like statistics. What is being expressed here is a concern that power relations will be enacted on the basis of content receptiveness rather than the validity of the pedagogical practice deployed by the individual academic. Once again, it appears as though the balance has tipped from the privileging of producer-interests to the privileging of consumer interests. Student evaluation processes are crude instruments that do not inherently guarantee that a balanced and fair appraisal is made of teacher performance and prowess.

Many of those I interviewed also expressed the concern that standardisation is limiting flexibility and is therefore having a negative effect on the learning environment. This is despite general support for the proposition that academics should be able to exercise less freedom in teaching than what they would expect in their research activities. In some respects this reflects the fact that social work/social welfare programs have long been structured in accordance with the requirements of the relevant professional bodies.

In the case of social workers this is the Australian Association of Social workers (AASW). The AASW 'determines the eligibility of graduates for membership through

assessment of social work programs³⁹⁸. Napier and George state that the AASW requirements include:

... foundation knowledge in sociology and psychology together with professional knowledge and skills building in social policy, principles and methods of social work practice, research and ethics, and field education in at least two practice settings of a minimum of 140 days³⁹⁹.

These authors contend that how individual schools and departments interpret some of the AASW requirements and incorporate them into their program is an open question in that 'the empirical evidence is poor'⁴⁰⁰. Interestingly, in my study there was a marked difference in terms of the extent to which accreditation requirements impacted on what academics did in their teaching programs. Participants at Sandstone universities suggested that the accreditation requirements were loose and had little effect on what happens inside the universities. Academics from New and Gumtree universities viewed these requirements as more strict and influential.

It is difficult to account for this variation. However, it is not unreasonable to suggest that this, in part, reflects power variations between the professional body and different universities. That is, the AASW 'needs' the Sandstones to validate and reinforce the professional status of social work. In contrast, universities with less institutional 'clout' are dependent on the AASW to validate their activities and the worth of their programs/students. Thus the extent to which professional bodies limit the freedom of academics in relation to their teaching is dependent upon their institutional location and claims about the circumstances that exist in one institutional setting are not necessarily transferable across all Australian universities.

³⁹⁸ L. Napier & J. George, 'Changing social work education in Australia', in *Social Work Education*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2001, p. 77.

³⁹⁹ L. Napier and J. George, 'Changing Social Work Education in Australia', in *Social Work Education*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2001, p. 77.

⁴⁰⁰ Napier & George, 2001, p. 84.

The preceding discussion suggests that fields of possibility vary from one institution to the next in terms of the extent to which academic activity is constrained by normative regulation, the exercise of managerial control and resource limitations. Although these may not play out as acts of prohibition, they must still count as power relations that not only limit the exercise of freedom but also demarcate forms of scholarly engagement that are permissible and desirable from those that are not.

Overall, it seems the conditions of academic activity are increasingly being hedged in by market demands, national political agendas and new kinds of institutional priorities. The logic of entrepreneurialism is being enacted through performance management, accountability regimes and workload negotiations. These are key sites of power within every university. The logic of economic productivity is also reinforced informally in terms of what kinds of activities and outcomes attract a mention as staff meetings. These mechanisms of power not only reinforce the privilege given to economic productivity but they also engender conflict between academics thus minimising the prospects of collective action against the normative regime that dominate contemporary university settings.

Within this context, academic freedom is becoming increasingly difficult to exercise. Within many Australian universities, ‘managers’ have come to preside over an expanded managerial domain which legitimates their prerogative to determine academic priorities, the configuration and location of academic programs, the structure of the academic workforce and the key conditions in which academic activity is conducted⁴⁰¹. However, the idea that ‘self-regulation’ has been replaced by managerial regulation is misleading. Self-regulation has become imbricated in managerial regulation in a way that achieves a much more intense power relation. Academics govern themselves in relation to the objectives, priorities and preferences set by others.

⁴⁰¹ The work of Patricia Gumport suggests that these changes feature in universities in other Western countries. See P. Gumport, ‘Academic Restructuring: Organisational Change and Institutional Imperatives’ in *Higher Education*, Vol. 39, 2000.

This situation is exacerbated by the academic professions' lack of solidarity and by a style of academic professionalism that 1) is self interested and 2) creates numerous alibis for passivity and inaction in the face of institutional practices and social arrangements that reproduce exclusion, inequality and injustice – not to mention a lack of openness, transparency and public accountability. Unfortunately, most of the resistance that academics engage in is limited in so far as its acts to ameliorate the worst excesses of the current arrangements rather than challenging the dominant logic and norms that underpin them.

The bigger picture

The findings of this research are cause for concern in that they do not bode well for the future of universities as public institutions. Put simply, the ethos and practices of many Australian universities and many Australian academics militate against practices of community engagement and social criticism both inside and beyond the university walls. What is at stake here is the openness of our knowledge production practices, the wellbeing of our communities and the health of our democratic politics.

Rather than institutionalizing dissent, universities are becoming spaces of conformism. Economic instrumentalism in scholarly activity is engendering a form of pragmatic closure that is stripping the university of its' potential to challenge and confront social relations and knowledge production practices that disenfranchise people and/or reproduce disadvantage and oppression. Akerlind and Kayroos argue that the significance of academic freedom is now to be defined in the likelihood of its absence:

Without academic freedom ... the generation of ideas and knowledge could be limited to those ideas that were only of economic benefit to society or supporting ideological approaches. Social commentary would be circumscribed and the learning experiences of students would be reduced particularly in terms of the breadth of ideas and knowledge to which they are introduced. Furthermore without academic freedom, there would be a negative

impact on the intellectual creativity and internally motivated productivity of academics themselves⁴⁰².

The perception and experience of academics interviewed for this study suggest that the Australian higher education sector is rapidly moving towards such a state. In the current circumstances I believe that we are entitled to mourn the loss of an opportunity to make the university more accessible, more ethical and more useful in terms that go beyond well the economic. As Hans Weiler puts it, the 'knowledge society' discourse bears witness to a more intimate relationship between power and knowledge in the modern era⁴⁰³. In effect, 'knowledge and power are connected by a relationship of reciprocal legitimation – i.e. knowledge legitimates power and, knowledge is legitimated by power'⁴⁰⁴. The decisions of government and the corporate sector are justified by reference to a bodies of knowledge constructed within the universities. But far from being a one way street, knowledge 'derives a great deal of its own legitimation from decisions of the state – decision on, for example, what is to be learned, ... what sort of knowledge should enjoy public funding':

What becomes manifest here is not only the close and often intricate relationship between knowledge and power, but also and most particularly the capacity of this relationship to serve as an instrument of reciprocal legitimation⁴⁰⁵.

In the era of the 'enterprise university', the Howard Government has enabled the corporate sector to engage the symbiotic relationship between knowledge and power. That's not to say that knowledge hasn't previously been used to legitimate Government/corporate power and vice versa, but it is to say that the relationship has

⁴⁰² G. S. Akerlind & C. Kayrooz, 'Understanding Academic Freedom: The views of social scientists', *Higher Education Research and Development*, Vol. 22, No. 3, November, 2003, p. 337.

⁴⁰³ H. Weiler, *Challenging the Orthodoxies of Knowledge: Epistemological, Structural, and Political Implications for Higher Education*, paper presented at the Colloquium on Research and Higher Education Policy of the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research, and Knowledge, Paris, December 1 - 3, 2004.

⁴⁰⁴ Weiler, 2004, p. 9.

⁴⁰⁵ Weiler, 2004, p. 10

become much more intense and that this is deliberate. Governments and universities unabashedly embrace this relationship and in so doing subjugate knowledge that would challenge the legitimacy of accepted/acceptable understandings and/or dominant power relations that impact significantly on how people live their lives.

There are two things that make the current conditions of academic work more troubling than it otherwise would be. The first is the silencing of dissent and advocacy in the non-government sector. In their discussion paper Sarah Maddison, Richard Dennison and Clive Hamilton present the findings of a survey they conducted in regard to 'NGO perceptions of the barriers limiting their ability to participate in public debate'⁴⁰⁶. This report raises serious concerns about the health of our democratic politics. The authors of the report argue that:

Prime Minister Howard ... has challenged the legitimacy and relevance of collective action in the policy sphere, claiming that there is a 'frustrated mainstream in Australia today which sees government decisions increasingly driven by the noisy, self-interested clamour of powerful vested interests', by which he meant organisations such as ACOSS, Greenpeace and women's groups rather than business lobby groups.

As a result of this shift many disadvantaged groups that had taken years to organize themselves sufficiently to have a voice have found themselves increasingly excluded from the policy-making process. There has been a 'hostile, negative and often emotional campaign' to undermine the credibility of NGOs. Tactics include freezing out and de-funding uncooperative organisations, use of intimidatory methods, and micro-management of relationships between the government and peak organisations.

While state governments are also guilty at times of pressuring NGOs to conform, the Howard Government's willingness to smother dissent poses a disproportionate threat to the democratic process in Australia. The survey responses indicate that, over the past nine years in particular, the Federal Government has been highly effective at silencing, or at least muting, its critics in civil society. There are grounds for serious concern that the longer this goes on the more difficult it will be to reshape and rebuild the structures of democratic participation. Like individual citizens, community groups are being

⁴⁰⁶ S. Maddison, R. Dennison & C. Hamilton, *Silencing Dissent, Non-government Organisations and Australian Democracy*, Discussion Paper No. 65, June 2004, available: www.tai.ogr.au/documents/downloads/DP65.pdf, p. ix, viewed 12 January 2007.

worn down and are increasingly reluctant to engage in the democratic process because they no longer believe that they can make a difference⁴⁰⁷.

The silencing of community groups and non-government organisations is itself exacerbated by current practices in the parliamentary sphere. On the first of July 2005, the Federal coalition took control of both houses of parliament. This was the result of the federal election in October 2004. Prime Minister Howard promised to use his Senate majority with caution, 'It's a very good outcome but I want to assure the Australian people that the government will use its majority in the new Senate very carefully, very wisely and not provocatively. We certainly won't be abusing our newfound position'⁴⁰⁸. The *Australian Democrats*, a minor political party have been monitoring the Governments' use of the senate for possible abuses of political power. The Senate Watch section of their website details a significant decline in democratic process since 1 July 2005 with debate regularly 'guillotined', proposed legislative amendments rejected and senate committees hamstrung, 'The Government abolished the Senate's references committees and gave themselves the majority on the eight remaining committees and the Chairs of all of them'⁴⁰⁹.

Taken together, the contemporary relations of power and freedom in Australian public life are cause for serious concern. What is at stake here is the health of our democratic politics and the wellbeing of those who are not in already privileged positions within our society.

In regard to the Federal Governments future vision for universities there is little cause for celebration. In June 2006, the current Minister for Education, Science and Technology, Julie Bishop, released a report that her department commissioned from

⁴⁰⁷ Maddison, Dennis & Hamilton, 2004, pp viii-ix.

⁴⁰⁸ 'Howard wins control of the senate' in *The Age*, October 28, 2004, <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/10/28/1098667878620.html>, viewed 25 January 2007.

⁴⁰⁹ Australian Democrats, *Senate Watch*, http://www.democrats.org.au/campaigns/senate_watch.htm, viewed 26 January 2007.

PhillipsKPA regarding knowledge transfer. The follow is an excerpt from Minister Bishop's speech on that day⁴¹⁰:

The report focuses on two types of knowledge transfer and I will outline both to you.

First is knowledge transfer as the process of engaging, for mutual benefit, with business, government or the community to generate, acquire, apply and make accessible the knowledge needed to enhance material, human, social and environmental wellbeing.

The second is knowledge transfer for commercial benefit. This is defined as the process of engaging, for mutual benefit, with business or government to generate, acquire, apply and make accessible the knowledge needed to enhance the success of commercial enterprises.

I do not consider that our preferred approach to knowledge transfer – should we eventually adopt one – needs to be one or the other of these. To my mind, one is overly focused on the commercialisation of research, which is supported elsewhere through other mechanisms; while the other is too broadly concerned with the general engagement of universities with their external stakeholders.

I believe that it is preferable to consider a middle course between these two alternatives. In adopting a middle path, knowledge transfer would be the process of engaging with business, government or the community to generate, acquire, apply and make accessible knowledge for quantifiable economic benefit for the community.

The narrow-mindedness of the Minister's account of knowledge transfer and community engagement is quite striking. The statements suggest that there is no time like the present to start actively contesting this agenda. In the context of an interventionist government and corporatist-managerial university executive, to do nothing is to do something. Being passive spectators of the institutional conditions of our academic existence enables the reproduction of power relations that mock our espoused values and challenge our capacity to practice ethical and responsible scholarship.

⁴¹⁰ J.Bishop, *Keynote Address to the Knowledge Transfer and Engagement Forum*, Darling Harbour, Sydney, 16 June 2006, <http://www.dest.gov.au/Ministers/Media/Bishop/2006/06/b001160606.asp>, viewed 20 January 2007.

Ways Forward

The late Edward Said, an eminent scholar and activist once described the university as 'a kind of utopian state', a 'grandiose idea'. Said argued:

...most of us tend to think of the university as a place where one has a career, which is certainly true, and there's nothing wrong with that; but if you wanted to you could have a ... more extended idea of what the university is ... something of this sort is at least useful to get discussion started. And it can be done by individuals⁴¹¹.

A discussion of the role of Australia's public universities is long overdue. Although there have been periodic outbursts, prompted by the publication of a book or the odd academic conference, by and large these engagements have cemented a fault line between those who hold a traditional view of universities modelled on monastic institutions and those who champion the enterprise university's corporate image and the practices, values and language that enact it.

We should not accept the binary which offers a choice between 'ivory tower' isolation or 'real world' market servitude. Other imaginaries are possible, valuable and worth pursuing. To some extent it is a matter of keeping Governments and university leaders accountable for the rhetoric they speak. As Margaret Thornton contends:

If we look to individual university Acts of incorporation, we see reference among their objects to phrases that accord with this idea of public good, such as the provision of education and professional services to the community, enrichment of cultural life and advancement of knowledge⁴¹².

As I have indicated previously, the Acts of incorporation for Victorian universities take this even in that they require universities 'to promote critical enquiry within the

⁴¹¹ Edward Said, cited in J. Nixon, 'Education for the Good Society: the integrity of academic practice', *London Review of Education*, Vol. 2, No. 3, November, 2004.

⁴¹² M. Thornton, *Universities: The Governance Trap and What to Do about it*, paper delivered at the forum Wednesday Night at the New International Bookshop, 2005.

university and within the general community'. We need to find ways to promote this as a counter-discourse, one which challenges the narrowness of the contemporary notions of the 'knowledge society'.

Professor Thornton argues that 'the issues are too complex and the opposition too powerful to be tackled by individuals and small groups'. I agree. We need to mobilise as a critical mass and build alliances through a public campaign. We should argue against the foreclosure of public universities and for specific changes. I would like to see a charter on academic freedom/responsibility and dedicated funding for public scholarship. I would also like to see funding and reward regimes that encourage engagement rather than insularity. I think it is imperative that we push for an independent body whose role it is to audit the functioning of universities in relation to community engagement and social criticism. New Zealand has set the precedent for this and we should follow this lead.

Even more challenging, we need a reconceptualised notion of academic professionalism, which will itself, be based on an alternative notion of academic freedom. In effect, public scholarship requires an ethical turn whereby academic responsibility and freedom are interconnected. I share with Mary Beattie and her colleague Jon Nixon, the belief that a self focused, self interested notion of academic freedom is indefensible, as is the idea that the *raison d'être* of universities is the creation of knowledge for its own sake⁴¹³. It is detrimental to the cause of institutional renewal, for the academic profession to be so self-absorbed. It is also ethically irresponsible. Whether academics like it or not, arguments for increased public funding for 'ivory tower' academic activity will gain very little purchase or public support in the battle to have an adequately resourced, publicly orientated, higher education sector.

⁴¹³. Nixon, M. Beattie, M. Challis & M. Walker, 'What does it Mean to be an Academic? A Colloquium', in *Teaching in Higher Education*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1998, p. 284.

The achievement of public scholarship is demanding in that it requires academics to practice in ways that manifest integrity, humility and courage. By integrity I mean a dedication to truthfulness. Nixon defines truthfulness as:

... a commitment to *accuracy* in respect of belief and *sincerity* in respect of professing those beliefs that we hold to be accurate. Learning how to learn is in large part a matter of acquiring those dispositions that make such a commitment possible. Truthfulness does not presuppose an ultimate truth; it aspires towards a set of practices that limit the potential violence of untruth⁴¹⁴.

To me, practicing scholarship with integrity also means holding steadfast to the values we espouse. It requires us to be reflexive about our own complicity in relations of power that have negative impacts not only on our own lives but on the lives of others.

By humility I mean openness to the knowledge and expertise of others. This means a letting go of the discourse of academic as expert and a valuing of a professional identity which embraces the academic as learner. This enables us to see that students and members of the public are knowledgeable in their own right and to embrace the fact that they bring life experiences, understandings and ways of knowing that we can learn from. It also means being willing to publicly test the rigour of our truth claims – not in academic journals but at public forums that we instigate or participate in.

The practice of freedom is not just a matter of achieving favourable institutional conditions. Freedom has an enabling condition that must be realized within the individual⁴¹⁵. This enabling condition is courage. Michael Waltzer argues that courage can come in many forms. In its political dimension, courage is ‘above all, the ability to sustain a commitment in dark times, to “hang in there” after the failure of a

⁴¹⁴ J. Nixon, ‘Education for the Good Society: the integrity of academic practice’, in *London Review of Education*, Vol. 2, No. 3, November 2004.

⁴¹⁵ M. Waltzer, *The Company of Critics: Social Criticism and Political Commitment in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed., Basic Books, New York, 2000.

campaign or movement'⁴¹⁶. In practice, courage means making a commitment to speak truth to power, to challenging domination, to taking responsibility for what we do in and through our scholarly engagements. In the current context, it means taking ownership over the conditions of our academic existence, their effects on scholarship and their outcomes, particularly in terms of truthfulness and the distribution of power and resources that is occurring in and through universities.

The last word may be left to Mary Burgan, the retired General Secretary of the American Association of University Professors (1994-2004). In response to the significant censorship of academics post September 11, Burgan argued that academic freedom is as much a responsibility as a right – 'in defending academic freedom, we must not expect a garden party. We don't need to apologise for bad manners and we shouldn't complain'⁴¹⁷.

⁴¹⁶ Waltzer, 2000, p. xiv.

⁴¹⁷ M. Burgan, 'Academic Freedom is No Picnic', in *Academe*, Vol. 88, No. 1, Jan/Feb, 2002, p. 80.

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Guided Interview Questions for Participants

1. Professional Background

- 1.1 What is your educational background?
- 1.2 What is your employment history both as an academic and outside of the university?
- 1.3 What is your current position within the school? Is your position a continuing appointment?
- 1.4 Can you detail for me the different aspects of your work? What activities/projects do you currently undertake?

2. The Role of the University

- 2.1 What do you see as the role and obligations of the university? In what ways, if at all, is this changing?
- 2.2 In what ways does your academic work contribute to this?

3. The freedom of academics

- 3.1 What is your understanding in relation to the freedom of academics?
- 3.2 In what ways do you exercise freedom in your current position? Can you provide me with specific examples?
- 3.3 What impacts-either positively or negatively-your exercise of freedom in relation to your academic activities? Can you give me some examples?
- 3.4 How, if at all do the accreditation practices of professional associations affect your academic freedom?
- 3.5 What about the normative effects – what gets constructed as desirable, acceptable or problematic within your school and how does that impact on your work. In what ways, if at all, have you engaged in contestation over the construction of normative parameters to your work?

- 3.6 If not already addressed: How do you understand power and how is power exercised within your university/school? What are the effects of power upon your academic activity?
- 3.7 Since you began your academic career, what changes - if any - have you experienced in relation to your freedom?
- 3.8 The literature on Australian universities includes an indictment of academics for failing to resist successive governments' higher education reform agendas – what's your response to this criticism and have you had any experiences that may shed light on this issue?
- 3.9 Some academics specifically include a political dimension to their understanding of freedom in that they view it as their responsibility to challenge the received wisdoms and cultural understandings of the day. This includes the prospect of critiquing their own institution, the higher education system and/or government policy.
- What is your view of this position?
- 3.10 In what ways, if at all, do you exercise political freedom as an academic?